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FEW people will be deceived by the vamped up enthusiasm of the Conservative press over the "victory" at Ottawa. For whom or for what has it been a victory? Mr. Bennett perhaps has scored more heavily than he should have done. Some exporters in Canada and other Dominions stand to gain something; some British manufacturers stand to gain something less; and some (but how many?) British unemployed may get jobs. These advantages will be offset by higher prices to a host of consumers, by a derangement of a great deal of our trade with countries outside the Empire—the United States, the Argentine, Denmark and others. The profit and loss under this head cannot be computed. Nor can we yet be sure what the net addition to the tariffs of the world will be; we can only be sure there will be an addition and not a diminution. From a material point of view Ottawa looks suspiciously like a Barmecide feast. As for the "idealists" who, if they did not venture to use the "blood-thicker-than-water" language of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, at least thought and talked romantically about Empire Unity—well, they have now seen some of the Dominion statesmen in the open. Mr. Bennett has not, of course, disintegrated the Empire. But his corrosive acid is hardly the right stuff to cement it.

No one anticipated a welcome for the communal award in India, except from such communities as the Europeans and Indian Christians. But the sharpness of the first reception by Moslems and Sikhs is somewhat surprising. Abuse by the Congress papers was, of course, taken for granted, along with the complete repudiation of the scheme by the Hindu Mahasabha. The executive of the All-India Moslem Conference passed a resolution declaring that no constitution would be acceptable to the Moslems unless it embodied the whole of their demands—an obvious impossibility. It is complained that the Government has by its ingenuity transformed the Moslem majority of Bengal into an actual minority. The conflict in the Punjab is peculiar, for while the grievance of the Sikhs is that the Moslems are given a statutory majority, the Moslems themselves cannot see it. Two Sikh members of the Round Table have resigned from the consultative committee, stating that the position offered to their community is worse than the present one, which is admittedly unfair. This intransigence of the Sikhs must be regarded as suicidal. Nothing is more certain than that the Sikh percentage in the Punjab will be markedly smaller thirty years hence than it is to-day.

* * *

The Report of the Bridgeman Committee on the working of the Post Office is a pretty complete vindication of the department against its critics. The Committee, which consisted of three hard-headed persons

entirely devoid of Socialist sympathies, has reported that the Post Office is for the most part highly efficient, and that no fundamental changes in its organisation need to be made. It lends no support whatever to proposals like those of Lord Wolmer, whose newly published book is reviewed on another page of this issue. The principal change actually recommended is one for which the department, under a succession of P.M.G.s, has been fighting for years past—that, instead of all surpluses passing to the Exchequer at the end of the financial year, the Post Office should make a fixed contribution to the State, and be allowed to apply any surplus to the improvement of the service. This is wholly desirable, and will facilitate far better and more continuous planning of postal development than is possible under the present system. Less clear in its scope and intention is the proposal to constitute, under the chairmanship of the Postmaster-General, a Post Office Board, apparently consisting of departmental heads, for the control of Post Office policy. This seems to be a sop to the advocates of the rejected plan of reorganising the Post Office as a non-political statutory corporation. But it is not clear what the powers of the new Board are to be, or how it is to be related to the P.M.G. or to Parliament. Nor is the scope of the proposal for the decentralisation of control by any means clear. But in general the Committee obviously wants the present system to remain; and while there is much to be said against it, it has this to be said for it—that a change might very easily have been for the worse instead of for the better.

* * *

Mr. Cosgrave's speech on Tuesday in reply to Mr. De Valera was both strong and sensible. He defended the position which his Government had taken up over the land annuities, and declared that there was no hope "along the line of legal argument" of the Free State's retaining them. Mr. De Valera's attitude might be good politics, but it was bad law and worse morals. The hope that he himself saw lay in Great Britain's chance of getting a remission of war debts; then there would arise a case for the remission of the land annuity payments. Meanwhile, there is steadily growing anxiety in Ireland about both the economic distress and the social disorder. The cattle markets in the west are badly hit by the tariff war with England; the I.R.A. are busy, after their own fashion, up and down the country. Last Sunday a force of a couple of hundred or so caused some alarm by seizing Donamon Castle, near Roscommon. The affair does not seem in itself to have been very serious; it was only a week-end "camp," we are told, for a conference and physical training, and the castle was tidied up and evacuated on Tuesday. But subsequent episodes may go farther. And armies are multiplying. Besides the regulars and the I.R.A., there is already a "White Army," which enrols citizens for the maintenance of law and liberty, and now Mr. Aiken, the Minister of Defence, asks for volunteers for a new "National Guard."

* * *

The German Reichstag will meet next week, and it is now generally expected that it will be promptly suspended and that the Papen Government will carry on autocratically. Apart from the maintenance of order, nobody knows what programme they have in mind, nor how they will deal with the powerful cross-currents of opposition which they will have to face. The general economic situation is lamentable; but any attempt to relieve it by the policy of "autarchy," or national self-sufficiency, seems fatuous. Herr von Papen has already declared himself against such a policy, which the Nazis clamour for, though it is rumoured that one or two members of the Government are nibbling at it. Dr. Luther, the president of the Reichsbank, strenuously combats all wild schemes, as he considers them—not merely "autarchy," but industrial planning, nationalisation of banking, inflation, the abandonment of the gold standard, or other currency experiments. These counsels of conservatism may be comforting to the orthodox, but they do not appear to offer much hope of extricating Germany from her slough of despond.

* * *

For the moment, however, all these anxieties and speculations are overshadowed by the storm aroused by the death sentences on the five Nazi murderers at Beuthen. Herr Hitler and his lieutenants have lashed themselves and their press into a fury over this "bloody judicial outrage," as they call it. Their newspapers have poured out a stream of vituperation against the Government and the Jews, and one of them, the *Angriff*, has been suspended for a week for "malicious abuse and derision of the Chancellor." The condemned men are assured that they are not murderers, but true patriots. Their patriotism took the form of hauling a Communist out of his bed, beating him, shooting him and finally kicking his neck until the carotid artery was severed! The Government are on the horns of a dilemma. To grant a reprieve would seem a sign of weakness, of partisanship, or at least of fear of the Nazis. To carry out the sentences would mean not only the risk involved in driving the Hitlerites to war *à outrance*, but the antagonising of public opinion in the Centre and on the Left. The Socialists, much as they loathe the crimes committed by the Nazis, are opposed on principle to capital punishment.

* * *

In Spain, likewise, a very large part of Republican opinion is against the death penalty, and this, with other reasons of political expediency, will probably save General Sanjurjo from facing a shooting squad. He has, indeed, been sentenced to death, but we assume that the Government will decide for clemency. They would, many of their best friends think, be wise to relax their severity in other directions too. They have gained in strength as well as in prestige by this abortive rising. Such danger as may have menaced the Republic from monarchism in recent months is now negligible; and the continued proscription or persecution of political and religious opponents, whose offence is merely criticism and not sedition, will render more difficult the tasks of administration and constructive reform. Señor Azaña and his colleagues have, we believe, some very promising plans for the making of the new Spain. But to get these plans into being they need the greatest possible measure of goodwill in the country. They require, no doubt, to be vigilant, and they are entitled to plead "Salus reipub-

licæ suprema lex." But methods which may be appropriate to Soviet Russia under its Marxian dictatorship do not square with the democratic constitution of Spain and the gradualist and Fabian principles of its Government.

* * *

During the remainder of the year the world will hear more and more of the economic distresses of the United States, first because they cannot be diminished before the winter, and secondly because Governor Roosevelt and the Democrats will exploit them to the utmost in the election campaign. The most notable of recent attempts to arrive at an estimate is made by *Fortune*, the sumptuous dollar monthly of New York, which, reckoning the unemployed at 11,000,000, gives the total number of people who will be in need of relief in the coming winter as 27,000,000. This cannot be an overestimate, for, although the authors of the survey may have exaggerated the unemployed figure, they have not allowed enough for the immense body of distress in the farming regions. Mr. Hoover expressed the earnest hope that the federal relief fund voted by Congress in June would not be applied for by the State Governments except in cases of extreme necessity, but no fewer than thirty States found it impossible to delay their applications. The terrible state of affairs thus revealed would seem to tell strongly in favour of the Democratic candidate, and yet it would not be safe to make this deduction. Governor Roosevelt has drawn up a set of nine proposals for national recovery. They are mainly financial, and therefore not at all inspiring for the party workers. Also, the Democrats have very little campaign money. They ask only for $300,000, and are starting a dollar election fund.

* * *

The London busmen have rejected by decisive majorities the proposals laid before them this week for a reduction of wages and a readjustment of duties. But it is not necessary to jump to the conclusion that a crisis is imminent; no service has a better record in the adjustment of industrial differences without recourse to strikes or lock-outs. The present demand for wage-cuts is obviously the sequel to the cuts recently enforced on the Underground railway, and accepted after long negotiations by most of the Trade Unions concerned. But the busmen are probably better organised than the workers on the Underground, and they certainly suffer less from inter-union divisions and differences of policy. They may therefore feel strong enough to stand out against the proposed reductions, even though the main body of the London railwaymen did not. Or they may, at the least, be more successful in negotiating a mutually acceptable compromise. There appears to be a plentiful crop just now of demands for the reduction of wages in face of the depression, and this extends to the sheltered as well as the unsheltered trades. It is, of course, true that workers in sheltered trades are getting a good deal more than those in the unsheltered trades largely dependent on exports. But it does not follow that the appropriate remedy is to reduce all classes of workers to the same dead level. Especially if the cost of living is destined to rise as a result of the Ottawa agreements, and perhaps of new developments of monetary policy as well; cutting of wages is obviously an inappropriate way of attempting to meet the present economic depression.

* * *

The master cotton spinners have now joined the manufacturers in demanding a general reduction in wages, and there will have to be negotiations with the various Trade Unions representing this section of the industry. Meanwhile, the Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester has succeeded in his efforts for the reopening of negotiations between the weavers and their employers, and, as we write, the two sides are in conference in Manchester under independent chairmanship. There is strong pressure among the workers, especially in North-East Lancashire, for an immediate extension of the stoppage in sympathy with the strikers at Burnley, where the operatives' resistance is still unbroken. In North-East Lancashire a strike can take place without notice, whereas in the rest of Lancashire the custom is that at least a week's notice should be given. Thus the conflict would spread by stages, first to the weavers in the northern towns, then to the rest of the weavers, and perhaps later on to the spinners and cardroom operatives as well. But there seems to be some hope in the resumed negotiations; the point about reinstatement, which caused them to break down, ought to be capable of adjustment without a stoppage, and, if this were out of the way, agreement on the wage question could probably be secured. The whole affair is unfortunate in the extreme; for lower wages will certainly not solve Lancashire's difficulties, but while wages are in dispute it will be very difficult to secure attention for anything else.

* * *

When it elected the editor of the *News of the World* as its president, the Institute of Journalists was not, of course, acting blindly, but even the complaisant Institute can hardly have been overjoyed with the address read from the chair at Cardiff on Monday. Sir Emsley Carr's knowledge, or recollection, of the older journalism may be judged from a passage devoted to the Victorian daily. Fifty years ago, he said, the English newspaper reader was supposed to have only one interest in life, home politics. Foreign politics were almost disregarded, and very rarely did foreign news occupy more than from a half-column to a column, while speeches and "exhaustive reviews of books" filled more space than the news. We all know about the absurd verbatim reports of speeches, but there cannot have been a middle-aged journalist in the audience who was not ready to tell Sir Emsley Carr that he was talking rubbish. The first London daily to provide a half-page of reviews was thought to be revolutionary. The over-balance of foreign affairs in the old morning papers was its most conspicuous feature, and the editorial tradition of having the first leader on a foreign topic, if anywise possible, was a byword. As for "human interest," naturally of the first importance to this authority, the old editor believed in serving up crime hot and long—although, to be sure, he could never have competed in that field with the Sunday organ which, under Sir Emsley Carr's direction, exemplifies the "wholesome and beneficial advance" upon which he descanted. The Institute of Journalists elected him president for a second year.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF OTTAWA

IT is the common experience that Protection is a slippery slope down which the country which once begins upon it is apt to plunge at an ever increasing pace. It has proved so with Great Britain, whose first departures from Free Trade took place during the war. The McKenna duties were succeeded by the special protection of "key industries" and by safeguarding. Then came the silk duties, and a gradual extension of safeguarding to additional trades. The financial crisis of last year afforded a pretext and an opportunity for a wide range of emergency duties on imported manufactures and horticultural produce; and, though the excuse of the crisis was no longer valid, the Government made haste early this year to put the new protective system on as permanent a footing as it could. Even so, the staple foodstuffs continued to be exempt from import duties; and the home growers of wheat were given a subsidy under the guise of a quota in place of the tariff protection desired by Lord Beaverbrook and his friends. It seemed as if the popular feeling in favour of a free breakfast and dinner table was still strong enough to merit respect, and that even the "National" Government would want courage to do more than nibble at the people's food.

The optimists who believed that so much of prudence or common sense was still left to our statesmen have now been proved wrong, and under cover of a vigorous waving of Imperial flags almost the entire range of necessary foodstuffs has been brought within the scope of one form or another of protection. There is to be a tax imposed on wheat, as well as on butter and cheese and raw fruit and eggs and rice. Meat imports, including beef and mutton in addition to bacon and ham, are to be subject to quantitative regulation under schemes not yet disclosed, and these schemes are designed to secure both protection for the home producers and an effective preference for Empire exports. There are, indeed, in certain cases words used to indicate that the non-tariff preferences will be in some sort conditional on the availability of Empire supplies at a world price. But it is impossible to doubt that the effect of the new protection must be to raise substantially the cost of living in this country.

Nor is this the only, or even the most serious, consequence of what Mr. Baldwin and his colleagues have done at Ottawa. The effect of the new orientation of the British market towards the Dominions must be seriously to reduce the imports of this country from Denmark, the Argentine, and other countries with which we have had close commercial relations; and that is bound to result in a fall of British exports to countries from which we are no longer prepared to buy on the old scale. Moreover, this further plunge into extreme protectionism removes all possibility of Great Britain taking the lead in any movement to guide the world back to commercial sanity. For in this respect high protection by Empire agreement is a great deal worse than high protection imposed as a purely national measure. Any attempt to go back on what has been done at Ottawa will not only meet with the furious opposition of all the vested interests at home which we are now proceeding to entrench, but will also be officially opposed by the Dominion Governments, represented as a breach of pledges solemnly given to them, and denounced as an attempt to break up the solidarity of the Empire. Great Britain has not merely gone protectionist *à outrance*; she has tied herself hand and foot to protectionism in its most objectionable forms.

Nor is this all. There is in the Ottawa agreements no specific mention of Russia, and we have good grounds for the belief that the sensible majority of the Government are opposed to a policy of cutting off our nose to spite our face. But there will certainly be pressure from British Die-hards as well as from the Dominions for a boycott of Soviet wheat and timber. And that pressure may be difficult to resist. For our delegates have promised to prohibit imports sent in under the auspices of State trading organisations if it is held that they are being brought in under conditions which threaten to destroy the effects of the intended preferences to the Dominions.

In fact Mr. Bennett, who was being attacked so vehemently a few days ago for the intransigence of his demands, seems to have won a handsome victory over the British delegates. It is unfortunately not possible as yet to measure the real extent of the preferences accorded to this country in return for the enormous concessions which we have made; for the full schedule of preferences to be given to British goods is not available. But there is no sign in the preliminary lists that Mr. Bennett has made any big advance on his original offer, which was generally denounced as absurdly inadequate; and it is impossible to believe that any scale of preferences within the power of the Dominions to grant could compensate for what Great Britain has consented to concede. The preferences we are to get are to be subject to the condition that no efficient industry already in existence in the Dominions shall be endangered by them, and in Canada's case there is even a further reservation in favour of "infant" industries.

Much stress has been laid on the "competitive principle," by which Dominion protection is to be adequate, but no more than adequate, to offset differences in the cost of efficient production in Great Britain and in the Dominion concerned. This principle is, however, necessarily so vague that everything is bound to depend on how it is administered. No workable definition either of efficient production or of its relative cost in different countries can possibly be framed. All that will be secured by the acceptance of the principle is the right of the British manufacturers to protest against duties which they consider unreasonably high. There will be no clear basis on which adjudications can be made when any such protests are actually entered. The Ottawa formula will in effect leave the Dominions practically as free as before to make their tariffs on British manufactures as high as they like, in order to protect their own industries, provided only that they clap still higher taxes on competing imports from foreign countries. It will in all probability raise the average height of tariffs rather than lower it, and the value of preferences based on very high normal rates of duty is likely to be most disappointing to the producers in Great Britain.

Thus the Ottawa decisions, so far from carrying us in the direction of Empire Free Trade, are calculated to lead to a perpetuation of high tariffs both in the Empire and in the world as a whole. Even if, behind these high tariff walls, Empire countries are prepared to grant real and substantial preferences to British manufacturers, it is impossible to conceive of Empire markets as affording an adequate outlet for British products, in face of the restriction of British exports to foreign countries which the restriction of our imports from these countries is bound to involve. We have forfeited our leadership of the world movement for greater freedom of trade; we have embroiled ourselves with many of our best customers; we have more than half promised to boycott Russia. Such are the Greek gifts which Mr. Baldwin and his colleagues are bringing us back from Ottawa.

NO MORE EMIGRATION

THERE has been no more remarkable trait of the British people during the present century than their growing indifference towards the enormously important question of emigration, and especially of migration within the Empire. This indifference is directly related to the social facts, which have changed beyond all recognition in a single generation, but it is encouraged by the ill-informed rubbish that continues to be poured out in print and by word of mouth, not seldom by persons and organisations connected with various enterprises, or dreams, of new Empire settlement. A great deal of this stuff is gravely misleading, and no small part of it is altogether mischievous, particularly in the Dominions. There is a widespread notion in Canada and Australia that politicians and philanthropists in England will not inform themselves as to Dominion conditions, although they are ready to talk endlessly about Empire needs and Empire development. The remedy, of course, lies in the plain statement of the facts, and these are furnished from year to year by the reports of the Oversea Settlement Committee.

The report for the year 1931–32 just issued (Cmd. 4143, 6d.) is a brief and convincing document, usefully supplementing the findings of the Astor Committee, published two months ago. Once again the Committee lays stress upon the central fact, to which attention has been called in each year of the great world depression, that emigration has ceased. There is now no outward movement worth discussing, in any part of the world, of white people belonging to our section of the human race. Such movement as there is to-day goes all in the wrong direction, from the Dominions back to the Mother Country. Twenty years ago the net annual total of emigrants from Britain was roughly 300,000. For some years after the war it was not much below 100,000. During last year, for the first time on record, the outward flow of people intending to settle overseas has fallen short of the flow into Britain from the Dominions. Here are the more important figures of this unfavourable balance. In 1930 Australia returned to Great Britain 6,550 more persons than were received; in 1931 the number had risen to 7,935. Since the great depression began appeals for repatriation in Britain have been coming from associations of emigrants in Australia. These could not be entertained by the British Government. "It has been decided after a full consideration," the Committee says, "that wholesale repatriation proposals are impracticable." In 1930 Canada returned to Britain 2,982 emigrants for the reason that they had come upon the public charge. In 1931 the number increased to 4,269. All the Dominions have established the most severe restrictions. Three years ago the Scullin Government placed a ban upon assisted immigration, and since this decision was taken the important Loan and Immigration Agreement between Britain and the Commonwealth Government has been terminated by mutual consent. The agreement with Canada for assisted emigrant passages ended December 31st, 1931, and is not being renewed. The Dominion Government enforces with the utmost rigour its Order in Council against every worker "seeking to enter Canada under contract or agreement, expressed or implied, to perform labour or service of any kind." And last year New Zealand passed a restriction Act "which compels British subjects who are in indigent circumstances to obtain permission to land." And so it goes on. The Dominions are bearing their full share of the burden of depression. They cannot find work for their own people, and therefore they shut and bolt every door against the immigrant, from Britain as well as from continental Europe.

In the face of facts so harsh, and reasons so conclusive, there is obviously no ground for adverse criticism of the policy of the Dominions. But it is none the less imperative for us to take account of the fact that the restrictive policy is not wholly related to, or conditioned by, existing economic circumstances. The policy itself, that is to say, is not temporary but permanent. The British Dominions, like the United States, have entered upon the considered plan of limiting immigration and controlling their population, and this plan, there can be no doubt, will be steadily pursued. British Governments and the British people must adjust themselves to the realities of a problem which, however it may be grappled with during the next ten or fifty years, will bring incalculable consequences for the system to which we belong. And in the meantime, let us avoid the "clotted nonsense" that disgraces so much current propaganda of Empire settlement. "Man is an animal who migrates at his will and pleasure," says a clerical writer on emigration in the August number of the *Nineteenth Century and After*, and he notes that there are "11,500,000 square miles over which the British flag flies." There are; and the self-governing peoples of at least 7,000,000 square miles are resolved that they and they alone shall have the decisive word as to the components of their population. The will and pleasure of migrant man are entirely outside the question. "The cultural effect upon the East," this writer further remarks, "of 60,000,000 or even of 30,000,000 white men settled in the Island Continent should be considered." It should not. There is no conceivable future for Australia that could make such figures of settlement anything but fantastic.

A LONDON DIARY

THE armed bandit or modern version of the highwayman is becoming much too common here. The experience of America and other countries shows that the gunman, once he has established himself in civilised society, is a pest not easily eradicated. There is one factor in his establishment which is of great importance, but which I rarely see mentioned. I have never been able to understand why civilised countries allow private persons in any circumstances to possess revolvers and automatic pistols. They have no practical use except for the commission of crime. I presume that it is still necessary to allow their use by the armed forces of the Crown, including the police, but such as are required for public purposes should be "Service revolvers" made in Government factories and strictly accounted for. Otherwise there should be an absolute prohibition of the manufacture of such weapons by private firms, of their importation by private persons, and of their sale to or possession or use by private persons. We do not allow private persons to manufacture or possess cocaine; why on earth should we allow them to manufacture

or possess automatic pistols? If the stringent laws suggested by me were introduced with heavy minimum penalties the gunman would fail to establish himself here. This view is confirmed by what I read in a recent book by the Warden of Sing Sing prison: in his view the increase of violent crime in the United States is partly due to the way in which under American law the acquisition of a "gun" is made easy to any one.

* * *

The last King of Portugal, who has just been buried with some difficulty, is reputed to have been a man of some intelligence and a great bibliophile. Intelligence, according to those who knew them at close quarters, has not been a strongly marked characteristic of the Royal families and ex-Royal families during the last generation. A middle-aged diplomatist this week in private conversation was giving me *his* reminiscences of the kings and princes with whom he had been brought into contact. He agreed with one of our Prime Ministers, who once told him that there were only two kings whom he would ever voluntarily have asked to dine at his club—the ex-German Emperor and the present King of Italy. The diplomatist told me that the highest position in ordinary life that any king or prince he knew could possibly have attained to if he had not been born in the purple was that of a cavalry officer, but in most cases it would be that of an insurance clerk. I was not surprised at this estimate when he went on to describe the sort of ceremonies that he had seen the ex-King of Spain and the late Tsar perform when receiving ambassadors and their staffs.

* * *

The ambassadorial staff were all lined up and the monarchs moved from one to the other giving five minutes' conversation to each of a platitudinous nature incredible in ordinary society, while the Ambassador on each side of the one engaged in conversation had by etiquette to appear unaware of any conversation taking place. Occasionally there was some relief, as for instance when the Tsar asked an important ambassador whether he had a large colony of his compatriots in Russia and the ambassador replied, "J'ai deux cocottes et un nègre, Monscigneur." The Tsar was quite unable to deal with the situation, and many ambassadors were unable to restrain ambassadorial laughter. On another occasion when the British Ambassador introduced to the Tsar a new military attaché who had won the Victoria Cross, the Tsar asked the officer whether he might examine the decoration. The gallant but undiplomatic colonel handed it to him, remarking that it was made out of cannon captured at Sevastopol. The Tsar looked more uncomfortable than anyone else present.

* * *

Our own Royal Family are admirable representatives of their class, and they perform the civic functions demanded of them—many of an inconceivably boring nature—with skill and conscientiousness. But I sometimes think that the policy of keeping them perpetually in the public eye and stoking up our feelings of "loyalty" is overdone. The attitude of the B.B.C. towards the Royal Family, for instance, borders on the ridiculous, if indeed it has not already crossed it. The other day I saw a copy of the directions given to the staff at Broadcasting House as to what their deportment should be during the visit of the King and Queen; the twittering snobbery of the document was laughable. The same attitude can be observed almost nightly in the "General News Bulletin, Copyright Reserved." The other evening, being in the country and out of reach of evening papers, I turned on the wireless for news, because I was especially anxious to hear what had happened at Ottawa. There was not a word about Ottawa; we were not even told the most important fact—which surely the B.B.C. ought to have told us, if it is an impartial purveyor of news—that the day had been spent in unsuccessful negotiations between the British and Canadian representatives. The "news" consisted almost entirely of accounts of how various members of the Royal Family had reviewed various parts of the armed forces of the Crown in various parts of the world. On nine evenings out of ten there is too much of this kind of thing in the General News. And is it really a good thing that the announcer, in telling us that the Prince of Wales or some other member of the Royal Family has opened a hospital, should adopt the soft, sleek, slightly hushed tone of voice in which elderly suburban gentlewomen in the 'nineties used to tell their envious relations that they had just seen "the dear Queen" driving in the Park?

CRITIC.

WHY WE PLAY GAMES

WE middle-aged people were brought up in a world of illusions. We were told that games were justifiably glorified at public schools because they kept us fit, because the highest ideal was *mens sana in corpore sano*, because the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, and England had yet many battles ahead of her. Then the whole public school system was put under the microscope, and various pedagogues confessed their real motives. They remained perforce accomplices in the delusion that a rugger cap was better than a Balliol scholarship, because a mania for sport distracted adolescent minds from sexual interest, and because under any monastic system physical energy must be expended through harmless channels. In other words, games were at least in part a relief valve for sex. Similarly the proletariat were encouraged to regard the Arsenal's rise or fall as the pivot of the universe, lest they should muse too sourly on the evils of capitalism: and to adventure their careful shillings on Orwell, lest the prospect of an uncertain £3 per week for forty years of eight-hour days in a mass production factory should render them desperate and engender revolution. If anything should interrupt the annual sporting sequence of Ascot, Cowes, Goodwood, grouse, salmon, deer, and the like, even the most conventional aristocrats and plutocrats, together with all their youthful scions, might suddenly begin to think, and contemplate the alternatives between suicide and perilous social experiment. Life, viewed in its naked essence, is a sticky business, and when humanity realises the fact it is apt to commit instinctive violences. Let it be distracted by balls of various kinds—the small white gutta-percha ball for such as can afford club-houses and attendants carrying large sheaves of weapons—large brown leather balls for those who can only manage the price of standing room on a large cinder incline.

The latest apostle of these pernicious doctrines is Mr. Ely Culbertson, an ingenious American who is said to make £40,000 a year by teaching people the best manner of playing contract bridge. Contract, says Mr. Culbertson, is the great anodyne for sexual disharmonies in the middle-aged, especially middle-aged women. Failing to find the mate for whom they are subconsciously seeking, or having casually married some dreadful male created for quite a different type of woman, they attain bliss with the aid of a small table covered with green cloth, on the surface of which fifty-two small pasteboard oblongs assume ever-varying disharmonies. Games of all kinds—so the modern doctrine goes—exist to provide the disillusioned with an escape from life. They share this disgrace or this canonisation—call it which you will—with little Pekinese dogs and the collection of postage stamps and other innocent trivialities. At this stage in our reflections we discover unexpected affinities with the novel, the theatre, and the cinema, which serve a similar purpose by other means. When we play games, we temporarily delude ourselves into imagining that our real life is unimportant, that its failures

and disappointments are immaterial, and that if only we can coax that diabolical little sphere into its tin with the expenditure of one stroke less than the task normally demands, everything is worth while. When we read a second-rate novel or watch a bad film, we may or may not be taken out of ourselves. We always hope that we shall be taken out of ourselves; and if we accomplish the escape, we say that the novel or the film is "good"; if we miss the escape, the book or the picture is "tripe." On these occasions, dissatisfied with our own life, we try to squeeze ourselves into the skin of some puppet on page or screen. In each case, whether we use ball or book or cards or theatre, the process is psychologically identical. We are trying to escape.

Here we may draw a distinction between games in youth and games in later life. Youth has not yet found life go sour on him. He is vitally conscious of an abounding energy, which he is eager to expend; of a desire to excel, which he wishes to gratify. He might conceivably be taught under a wiser pedagogy to express both instincts in a more wholesome and intelligent fashion. But at least he is not seeking an escape from reality. An altogether sourer spectacle is to be witnessed on the golf links of the south coast and in the card rooms of Kensington. On the one you may see ancient men, sagging at the knees, playing bad golf which grows steadily worse year by year, and gradually becoming mentally incapable of any conversation more intelligent than an exaggerated and ridiculous joy that last month they got a birdie at the 13th. In the other, from 3 p.m. to midnight, day after day, you may see feminine faces from which years of triviality have ravaged all traces of sense and beauty, sharpening into predatoriness, basing eternal feuds on the ground that Mrs. Brown failed to see my "come-on" card. One is tempted to dream that in Utopia it will be a criminal offence to play games after one is twenty-five.

Abusus non tollit usum. Endow a fine brain and a noble character with perfect physique, and bless this rare combination with that precise niche in the activities of the community which fits him like a glove. Yet he will never be able to consecrate the whole of his waking hours to his supreme activity. The older he grows, the greater will be the number of hours which he must allot to recreation, if his faculties are to survive for their full term. If his brain and nature are all I have imagined, it may be questionable whether recreation will ever assume for him any of the more vulgar forms. He will probably seek his physical exercise in walking with a friend or a child, rather than in "chasing a quinine pill over a ten-acre lot," as an American comedian once stigmatised the royal and ancient game. It is hardly likely that his mind will seek relaxation in the permutations and combinations of fifty-two playing cards. But as we are not all hewn on his god-like scale, we minnows may not all ape the Triton. We may be cast in such a mould that we can repair waste tissues on the golf links or at the card table, without ever forgetting that such pastimes are intrinsically ridiculous. There will always be affinities between the ruins of a derelict abbey and the man whose main secret pride is that he plays for Crockford's against America, or was once amateur champion at golf. There was a time when religion played in more lives the function now usurped by the links and the bridge club. Failure and disappointment in this life were accepted as part of the inscrutable will of the Creator, destined to be explained and ameliorated beyond the veil in a glorious immortality. It is substantially because so many once useful, intelligent and happy people have been shorn of such expectations that they seek these absurd refuges. It is, of course, quite impossible to redeem any large proportion of the elderly victims of these modern British illusions; it might be unkind if it had been possible. It may not be too late to prevent the same fate overtaking their children as they move towards the shades.

GEOFFREY WEALD.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS HENCE*

THE Professor's story of the coming of world peace, and the development of agriculture in the British Isles is bound to create a mild sensation even in these tranquil years, for he reveals well-kept secrets. Nearly a century has passed since the continent of Europe decided to mechanise agriculture instead of war, and to build caterpillar tractors instead of tanks, but we only learn in these vivid pages the real reason of the change of heart.

In secret session of the British House of Commons, the French Chamber of Deputies and the representative gatherings of Germany, Italy, Austria, Holland, Belgium, Portugal and Spain, a simultaneous resolution was passed that, in the event of European war, members of the Cabinet, leaders of the Opposition, under-secretaries, newspaper proprietors on the side of strife, with the chiefs of the supply services and directors of armament firms, and their eldest sons, should be at once recruited for the front line and should enjoy the honour of coming first under the enemy's fire. This resolution, communicated to all concerned, and to their wives, brought home to our rulers in a memorable moment the futility, absurdity, and inconvenience of quarrels, and within two years eminent armament firms were busy making machinery for use in piping times of peace—typewriters, gramophones, wireless sets, and the rest. But though peace was assured by imposing upon all war makers and war supporters the instant necessity of dying for their country, and thereby showing by example instead of by deputy what a noble act it is, the obligation to make Great Britain self-supporting came about by merest accident.

The Professor tells us that one day the Prime Minister's aeroplane, which was taking him to a select luncheon party in London, developed a defect, and landed him in a neglected field on a derelict farm, where the weeds were so long and rank that they actually did damage to one of the wings. Some out-of-work agricultural labourers hunting for rabbits, a hungry parson searching for tithe, and a political economist who had lost his way, were the only figures to be seen, but the destitute farmer, noting the descent from his dilapidated farm house, came up and engaged the Premier in conversation. The parson joined in, the economist followed, and an interesting discussion ensued, of which the parson kept a record.

Parson, economist and farmer explained to their distinguished visitor, who was compelled to wait for his machine to be repaired, and of whose identity they were unaware, for he bore small resemblance to his photograph, that there were upwards of two million five hundred thousand men and women out of work in the British Isles and considerably more than five million acres of cultivable land equally out of employment.

"Indeed," remarked the Premier, earnestly, "this matter has given me and my friends most furiously to think. It may be that in the course of a little while action will be taken, but in the opinion of those best qualified to judge the time is not ripe. I may say in passing that, officially considered, time demands a lengthy period for any ripening process. We can console ourselves with the thought that imported food is cheap."

This his acquaintances denied.

"We have to pay over a million pounds a day for food we could raise here," declared the farmer.

"You must add to that bill," said the clergyman, "the cost of unemployment. This parish held 400 people when I came here as a young man, and had three thousand arable acres. Now it houses seventy people and has under five hundred arable acres."

* *A Review of the Years of Crisis.* By Professor D. R. Yasdust, F.R.S., London. Lock, Stock and Barrel. 2032 A.D.

"My father employed a score of men regularly; I employed three before I gave up," said the farmer. "They were not well paid, the old folk, but they lived, bred sturdy children, and were happy in their way."

"But," said the Prime Minister, "we are assured by our experts that this country cannot provide its own food."

"Not with the suitable climate, the land, the men and the markets?" inquired the clergyman. "What, in the name of common sense, are the other essentials necessary?"

"If we don't buy from the foreigner, how can he pay the interest on the money we have lent him?" demanded the Prime Minister, a little impatiently.

"He can't always pay it now," the economist reminded him, "and even if he could the pauperisation of millions of our workers and the destruction of our native soil is a very high price to pay for interest on loans. The five hundred millions that go to him in rough figures are paid," he continued dully, "as to three hundred and fifty millions by interest on investments, as to fifty millions by the profits of bankers and financiers, and as to one hundred millions by shipping. The profits of our export trade do no more to-day than pay for the import of raw materials.

"The people in touch with the land," he went on more brightly, "cannot reach the ear of our rulers, but if they could state the facts and the rulers had time to consider them, the whole aspect of England might be changed in three years. Our bill for imports would fall by seven figures, out-of-works would be limited to the incapables, degenerates and derelicts, and our factories would be working hard to supply the needs of villages now bereft of purchasing power."

According to the Professor, who is quoting from the clergyman's diary, the Premier asked for the economist's name and address, though he was not really concerned with either. He could not reach his friends in town, was very disturbed and said as much.

"Ah," remarked the farmer, "if I'd had that field properly sown to grass your machine would not have been hurt, and you'd have been with your friends by now."

"Is that so?" said the Premier, really interested at last. "*Then something must be done for farming.*"

A car came along and he went up to town determined to make the acquaintance of his own Minister of Agriculture, whom he had hitherto kept at arm's length on principle. There was a tradition at 10, Downing Street that Ministers of Agriculture must not be encouraged, because they always want what they can't have, and the P.M. did not even know the gentleman by sight. But his capable Secretary, a man of marvellously retentive memory, was able at once to tell him the Minister's name and to pick him out from the Cabinet rank and file.

Appalled by the searching nature of the Chief's questions, the Minister searched 10, Whitehall Place carefully, and found a couple of gentlemen who really knew something about farming; they coached the Prime Minister. He learned for the first time in his long and honourable career that this country has an admirable climate, both for corn growing and stock raising, and a suitable soil, that it possessed tens of thousands of capable if backward farmers, and literally millions of men and women who would rather labour to raise their food from Mother Earth than toil in the Stepmother Factory to earn the means of eating something out of a tin.

He learned that home production was strangled by trusts, combines, agents, intermediaries, unscrupulous shopkeepers, ineffective transport and the rest, and there was something akin to a monument more enduring than brass—of which he, like all Prime Ministers, had a more than adequate supply—for the man who would restore fertility to the fields of Britain.

The Professor goes on to deal in spirited fashion with the difficulties encountered by the Prime Minister. The President of the Board of Trade, the shipping interests, the meat importers, the wheat importers, even a noisy body of nondescripts called the N.F.U.*, endeavoured to stay his progress.

> But the word went forth from the high places of Whitehall and great companies of men and women shook the dust of the dole from off their feet and set out for the cultivation camps that rose throughout England's green and pleasant land. And with them into the sunlight and fresh air went the pale, anæmic, rickety children of the slums. At first, in hutments, with no more than bare necessities, they strove for their Motherland and stirred the fields from their deep sleep. The weeds and the thistles vanished, the hedges were brushed, the ditches carried the waste waters to the rivers and the sea. The happy island was able at last to blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit. Tens of thousands of middlemen found an honest occupation; the N.F.U. dissolved in hot air.

So writes Professor Yasdust in the height of his enthusiasm, a spirit of elation which we, who would be hard put to find an uncultivated field in this island to-day, or a national bill for any of the essential foodstuffs, must be at pains to understand.

Everybody knows that three years after the inauguration of the national campaign for food production, the tide turned. Great Britain entered upon the era of prosperity that made it economically possible to bring about all those changes in the lives of the people for which reformers had pleaded since first the country turned from her fields to her factories, and called upon other lands to supply the food she could always have grown for herself.

In a well-remembered speech made on the day when Great Britain was said to be self-supporting for the first time in a century, the Prime Minister said: "Ladies and gentlemen, the hour has struck at last when those of us who must fly to keep appointments will find no impediments on the sacred fields of our fathers and our children's children."

S. L. B.

Correspondence

MR. WELLS'S WORLD SOCIETY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Will you allow me, as one of those young would-be revolutionaries to whom Mr. Wells is seeking to appear in the guise of prophet, to make, in all humility, a few observations on his project for a world society?

"The basic structure of such an organisation," Mr. Wells writes, "must be a series of local groups, each planned primarily as a society for self-education, research and propaganda," with a view to "a common conception of the world, a common conception of history and morals and political conditions, and a clear and definite idea of the common objective of the movement." I have been asking myself whether such an insistence on unanimity on all social and historical questions may not perhaps defeat its own ends, and make the path out of international anarchy an even more difficult one.

Let me take history as an illustration of the objections which it seems to me can be made to Mr. Wells's demand that his followers must all think alike the world over, though I believe the result would be the same if biology and the social sciences were prostituted in this way to political ends. The study of history is more a matter of interpretation than of actual knowledge. Its essence is the weighing of evidence rather than the compilation of a mere catalogue of facts, and historical study therefore depends for its very existence on discussion and diversity of opinion. Again, any attempt to estimate the significance of world history for political purposes must inevitably be coloured by those local conditions, racial, climatic, and so on, which have helped to determine the actual course of events. Consequently, I think we are entitled to ask whether the "official history" which would be the result of Mr. Wells's efforts is either possible or desirable. Mr. Wells objects to the Labour parties spending their time on debate rather than on learning, but is not discussion the surest way of acquiring knowledge?

* All traces of this association have disappeared. Professor Yasdust hazards the opinion that the initial letters stood for "Nonsense and Futility Unlimited."

We must all of us be grateful to Mr. Wells for pointing out once again the need for education as an essential preliminary to political responsibility. But I may perhaps be allowed to express a doubt whether the intellectual dictatorship of Mr. Wells's committees will lead us much nearer a world order than "freedom of speech," as it is known in Italy, or the persecution of "anti-revolutionary mentality" of which we hear so much from Russia. I can imagine Mr. Wells's central committee letting loose the bloodhounds of international Fascism on those of us who have the temerity to disagree with their particular brand of liberal policy, and liberalism will struggle between tyranny and complete disruption. Constructive criticism I must leave to others, but I may be forgiven if I venture the opinion that progress towards an international organisation of society will be the result of discussion rather than of dogma.

New College, Oxford. EVERT BARGER.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I have read with great interest Mr. Wells's "Project of a World Society" in the current issue of the NEW STATESMAN, and should like to invite others in this neighbourhood who are interested to meet at my house to discuss the possibility of forming a local group.

If you could help me by publishing this letter in your columns I should be much obliged. P. BRANDON-JONES.

The Poplars,
Berkhamsted, Herts.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I have just read Mr. H. G. Wells's most interesting article in the current issue of your publication. Herewith I do myself the pleasure of sending you particulars of the "X" Society which has been established for nearly a year, and which has already held several meetings in London and issued works of interest, two of which I have pleasure in enclosing. Obviously Mr. Wells has never heard of our existence, otherwise he would never have ventured to name his proposed organisation the "X" Society. You will observe that the "X" Society is an educational, *non-political*, non-sectarian organisation.

31 Fetter House, G. E. O. KNIGHT,
Fetter Lane, E.C.4. (Chairman, The "X" Society).

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—With reference to Mr. Wells's article "Project of a World Society" in your issue of the 20th, may I draw your readers' attention to a society working along the lines indicated by Mr. Wells? The Promethean Society, which has evolved more or less spontaneously during the past two and a half years, has groups in various towns of Great Britain and correspondents world-wide.

I enclose copy of our last leaflet, and any inquiries addressed to the Secretary at 4 Parton Street, W.C.1, will be welcomed.

I may add that Mr. Wells is himself interested in our work and has been kind enough to give us his encouragement and support in various ways. E. M. BARRAUD.

THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I must not take up your readers' time by thanking "A. O. T." at length for his flattering reference to me in his letter on the German Government, published by you on August 20th. But I should like to assure him that I am by no means as harsh a critic of the present German Cabinet as he believes. I have not the text of my broadcast talk and I may have declared that Herr von Papen and his colleagues are like the "Bourbons who had never learned." What I had intended to say—and I admit there is often a difference between intention and fact—was that the Government had *still* to prove that it was more successful in learning and forgetting than the Bourbons were. It may turn out to be an excellent Government, but we can hardly judge until we know its detailed programme.

Meanwhile, it is certainly serving the very useful purpose of "debunking" the political parties. The longer it remains in office, the more difficult it is for the Nazis, the Centre and even the Social Democrats to avoid facing facts and deciding what they stand for. The Nazis, for example, will have to decide whether they are reactionary Nationalists, subsidised by the industrialists in the Ruhr, or Socialists, led by men of the Otto Strasser type. A pause for reflection can do no harm, and the present Government should be better able to assure one than any other.

There is, however, one cause for uneasiness. Almost every visitor to Germany since the war has been impressed by its atmosphere of youth, due not to any unusual percentage of young people, but to an unusual interest in new ideas. It would be a tragedy not for Germany alone but for the whole of Europe if a Government in Berlin were to divert this amazing energy and curiosity back into the old channel of militarism. The existence of the various unofficial armies suggests how readily this might be achieved. And that is why one hopes that Herr von Papen and his colleagues, whose own careers were built up with the help of a regime that disappeared in 1918, have learnt and forgotten a great deal in the intervening years. Personally, I believe "A. O. T.'s" optimism in this respect is probably justified.

38 Bedford Square, W.C.1. VERNON BARTLETT.

THE GOLD RUSH IN KENYA

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As publicity seems the only way of encouraging the Government of Kenya to keep its word, perhaps you can find space for a short note on the recent gold rush in North Kavirondo.

The district where gold has been found is a native reserve, and the land is therefore guaranteed to the natives in perpetuity under the Native Lands Trust Ordinance, the principle of which has been expounded time and again to quiet native fears. True, under the ordinance the Crown reserves to itself all mineral wealth, and the natives readily accept this as tribal law accords a similar right to the Chief. If, therefore, Government had worked the gold itself, or even allowed a concession to one large company which could be supervised, there is reason to think that the natives would have raised no serious protest.

But in fact it looks as if the Government has allowed white settlers to rush into the heavily populated reserve, to peg out claims and to put up more or less temporary buildings. True, Government is doing what it can to get proper compensation paid, but, as Miss Mair recently urged in your columns, money is seldom an adequate compensation for land; and too often a native accepts compensation in money only because he dare not refuse to sell.

Compensation, moreover, does not allow for the loss of privacy, which the native feels deeply, nor the humiliation to which the white prospectors subject him.

A gold rush never attracts the best sections of a community, and many prospectors consider that where interests clash the black man must give way. There is every reason to think that local officials are doing their best; but, when confronted by this attitude in front, they can do very little so long as Government at their back will not stand firm. In spite of White Papers expounding the paramountcy of native interests, it seems to be yielding now, as almost always, to the pressure of a vocal minority. A. C. CANDLER.

Marlborough, Wilts.

LOCAL LABOUR PARTIES

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—"Critic," in the London Diary, expresses surprise at the advanced views of a certain local Labour Party in the South of England. This, I think, is indicative of the cleavage existing between the local parties throughout the country and the "intelligentsia," who, for the most part, ignore the local parties, and prefer to do their political work away from the rank and file. The fundamental basis of the organisation of the Labour Party being democratic, this cleavage is bound to be harmful, for in moments of crisis it is the local party which is the corner stone of the edifice. The activities of the local parties are, it is true, too frequently limited to the whist drive and the weekly "social." But this is due to want of means rather than to lack of advanced views or devotion to the cause. Their membership is, as a rule, pitifully small, and largely made up of persons who cannot afford more than a penny a week, or unemployed who cannot even afford that amount, so that money-making is their first concern. If all Labour sympathisers would make a point of joining their local parties, and subscribing whatever amount they could afford towards their funds, the local parties could

then proceed with the work of canvassing their areas, preparing for elections, and, above all, propaganda.

I have recently become the secretary of my local Labour Party. I am also a member of S.S.I.P., and although a considerable number of my fellow members reside in this area few have joined the local party as individual members. They are badly needed, and the local parties are excellent fields for the propaganda which S.S.I.P. and similar societies exist to disseminate. Audiences at indoor and outdoor meetings are usually small; but if the early pioneers of the movement had demanded the audiences which some of the younger propagandists of to-day require before they will turn up to address a meeting Socialism would still be in its infancy. In those days, two men and a dog at a street corner inspired oratory. Now, audiences are expected ready-made; and the ready-made audience is usually composed of the already converted. Even Paul, the greatest propagandist in history, "disputed . . . in the market daily with them that met with him," and "taught publicly from house to house." A study of his methods might be recommended to aspiring propagandists of to-day. HELEN C. BENTWICH.

Hollycot, Vale of Health,
Hampstead.

THE MEANS TEST

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—If Mrs. Scarth knows where transitional payment has been refused and poor law relief at the same time granted, why did she not communicate with the local P.A.C. or Employment Exchange, or advise the applicants to do so? The matter would then have been speedily adjusted. But frankly I do not think there can be one such case in the whole city of Leeds. Leeds has a Public Assistance officer of exceptional ability in Mr. Fieldhouse, and I can hardly imagine his department blundering in the manner described. At any rate, the matter can still be adjusted, other conditions being in order. Usually, however, such alleged cases are found to conceal some vital flaw. In this (No. 7 L.C.C.) Area appeals were made to persons considering themselves wronged in the Committee's determinations to reopen the matter. The appeals were in the local press, but resulted in one response alone. In this case the applicant, while admitting his wife to be in full work, refused to disclose her earnings!

With respect to the Anomalies Act, Mrs. Scarth will find her refutation very largely in the Ministry of Labour's Report (Cmd. 4044), p. 80. Between October and December last year 154,811 disallowances were made by Courts of Referees under the Anomalies Act, and a further 30,000 between Jan. 1st and April 30th of the current year. A substantial proportion of these came to the poor law. The total increase of outdoor pauperism in the forty-seven areas reported in the *Labour Gazette* was roughly 100,000 in the year ending April, 1932.

I agree that in the early period of the Labour Government Courts of Referees were lenient, possibly even lax, but after the Treasury statement before the Unemployment Commission a decisive change set in. Misconduct, non-insurability, failure to apply, etc., were subjected to much keener analysis. It is inconceivable that such a change was without the cognisance of the Ministry.

The ministerial deputations, such as that of Manchester, to which I referred, very ably set forth the particulars of their increased outlay on relief, and the headings under which it arose. My main point, however, was to disprove the allegation that pauperism has increased through the Means Test. That, I assert, is an administrative impossibility.

127 St. James Road, (Mrs.) A. E. TERRETT.
Battersea, S.W.17.

[We cannot continue this correspondence.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

STOCK EXCHANGE OPENING

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your contributor "Toreador," referring in the last issue of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION to the question of Saturday opening of the Stock Exchange, reminds us that New York prices would not reach London until 3.15 p.m. This, however, was also the case in pre-war days, when the Stock Exchange was usually open on Saturdays, and our interest in American securities was much greater than it is to-day. It seems equally important to bear in mind that Friday's New York closing prices are always available in this country on Saturday morning, and a good many people connected with the Stock Exchange consider it unfortunate that we are so seldom allowed to make use of them. It seems probable that a large amount of business in American securities will pass from Stock Exchange firms to American houses with London offices.

Apart from business in American securities, many stockbrokers consider that there are other good reasons for opening the Stock Exchange on Saturdays besides the "moral argument" which "Toreador" mentions.

A common argument against opening is that "institutions" and large operators do not want to deal on Saturdays. But the Stock Exchange does not exist solely for these clients, and it is my experience that there is a considerable business to be done on Saturdays, and that many clients appreciate being able to deal then. Also, as indicated above, there are certainly occasions when business in American securities can be executed on Saturdays at prices which would not be possible either on the preceding Friday or the following Monday.

It is not to be expected that markets will always be as "free" on Saturdays as on other days, but I am convinced that Saturday business would expand gradually if the opportunity to deal were given.

The Stock Exchange authorities would do well to consider very carefully whether it is not their duty to grant every possible facility for business, rather than to do anything which may possibly hinder it.

I fear that opinion on this important subject has been unduly influenced by the unfortunate circumstances on the reopening Saturday last September. But the business position in this country to-day is very different from that of twelve months ago. STOCKBROKER.

THE MALVERN FESTIVAL

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—While praise is being universally and justly lavished upon the Malvern Festival, I should like to draw attention to a few matters which somewhat marred my enjoyment of the fine performances there last year, and still more this year.

In the first place, the theatre was far too hot by the first interval, and positively sweltering after that. I know it was filled to capacity and that the temperature outside was high, but the handbook waxed lyrical about the efficiency of the cooling system, and seemed to add insult to injury.

Secondly, there is a pervading atmosphere of snobbery which extends to the very ticket-attendants and waitresses. Surely evening dress for men, although *de règle* in London, should not be so considered at a festival held in holiday time in rural England in the height of summer.

I know that the box office has to be considered, but if the Malvern Festival is to develop into a *concours d'élégance* it will soon cease to function in its present capacity as a splendid stimulus to the general appreciation of English drama.

Eveleighs, Gittisham, PHILODRAMIST.
Honiton, Devon.

SLUMS AND BUGS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The shocking housing conditions to which thousands of fellow citizens return at the end of their day's work are unbelievable to the more luckily housed. A bug in Chelsea is an entertaining topic for "Critic's" weekly Diary. In Bethnal Green, battalions of these pests are daily—or nightly—fought unsung!

The "New Homes for Old" Committee is arranging an interesting and instructive section at the Trades and Housing Exhibition to be held at Olympia in September. Here, the work of slum clearance and reconditioning by the 22 Voluntary Housing Associations and others in the London area will be attractively displayed. A "Chamber of Horrors" will show the bug and other pests at home. For those like "Critic," whose "little faith in modern civilisation which events of 1914 to 1932 have left," this fight for better housing is, as Father Jellicoe expresses it, "Faith in Action."

It is to be hoped that numbers will visit this section of the exhibition, and by their insight into conditions will come away

resolved " to take arms 'gainst this sea of trouble, and by opposing end them ! " M. MOREL.

21 Old Ford Road, E.2.

THE TEN SENSES

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your correspondent A. P. Rossiter doubts the assumption of " Autosome," in his playful speculations concerning radiation and the receptor organs, that the radiations of shorter wave-length beyond the violet end of the visible spectrum, the actinic rays, are more penetrating than light rays. Any physicist will endorse the following statement of Professor Andrade: " There is a great absorption of all matter for the radiation of the extreme ultra violet on both sides of 300 ÅU. From this region the penetrating power increases as wave-length becomes shorter. . . . With X-rays any distinction between conductors ceases."

300 Ångström units wave-length (1ÅU = 10^{-8} cm.) is well into the ultra-violet region. The visible spectrum (light rays) extends from 8,000 ÅU to 4,000 ÅU. Mr. Rossiter's sunbathers are concerned only with the ultra-violet rays about 3,100 ÅU to 2,800 ÅU. The ultra-violet runs right into the region of X-rays including wavelengths as short as 136 ÅU. Cosmic rays (less than 0.01 ÅU) will penetrate anything we know.

I believe there is some experimental evidence for " Autosome's" statement that bats receive as a continuous musical note vibrations of less than 16 per second which we can perceive only as a series of discrete impacts, but I could not give the reference. Possibly " Autosome " may be able to furnish it.

12 Brondesbury Road, N.W.6. CECIL GORDON.

METTERNICH

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Concerning Mr. Ensor's notice of Mr. Lockhart's book entitled *The Peacemakers*, it appears to me that his attitude is similar to that of Mr. Lockhart, whom he upbraids, towards Metternich.

In Mr. Ensor's summing up of the Vienna Treaty the name of Metternich does not appear, rather giving one the assumption that he was in no way responsible for one of the fairest treaties history records.

Surely it was Metternich's high Tory and Legitimist dictum of a balance of power in Europe that contributed so much to the Treaty.

The fact also of the galaxy of great minds that were assembled in Vienna in 1814 being so infinitely superior to Versailles is another factor in praise of the great Treaty to the detriment of the former, which the author deals with so well.

The Burlington, Folkestone. B. VAN THAL.

"VANDALISM" AT ST. ETHELBURGA'S

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. A. R. Powys and the society he represents have so abundantly earned the respect and gratitude of Englishmen who are interested in the preservation of their ancient buildings that I accept his correction of my errors with all humility. If the church authorities, the Corporation of the City of London, the London Survey Committee and Mr. Powys himself are really all agreed on the point, it is obvious that the demolition of the shops over the porch of St. Ethelburga's was justifiable on purely architectural grounds.

But I did not protest on architectural grounds at all, and the precise age of these familiar features of Bishopsgate seems to me immaterial to the point at issue. I protested from the, perhaps excusably, sentimental standpoint of a native Londoner. The little shops were, in their way, unique; they were survivals from an older London which is rapidly disappearing and will soon have gone altogether; they did no harm to anyone, and for generations they had been pointed out to tourists as interesting curiosities. I was first shown them nearly thirty-five years ago, when I was a small boy, by an enthusiastic old antiquary who took me for a day's sight-seeing in the City (and gave me lunch at Crosby Hall). They were regarded, even then, with so much affection by Londoners that I am surprised to find myself unsupported in your columns in deploring their removal.

While I fully appreciate the value of the work done by his society, I should like to suggest to Mr. Powys that, where London is concerned, it is not only buildings of pronounced antiquity or architectural merit which are deserving of preservation. There are shops, inns and private houses of no older date than the beginning of the nineteenth century which have a sentimental or " association " value not only for Londoners but for visitors and tourists. As regards tourists from English-speaking countries, Dickens is still probably London's greatest " draw." I hear it rumoured that one of the most famous of the surviving city taverns authentically associated with Dickens is now threatened. It is not an " ancient building," nor has it any more architectural importance than the St. Ethelburga shops. Its destruction, however, to suit the convenience of private commercial interests will cause lamentation throughout the English-speaking world, and—when it is too late—an outcry in the London press.

What, I suggest, we urgently need, is a Vigilance Committee, charged with the duty of giving the public full warning in advance of proposed demolitions of buildings which it is in the national interest to preserve. Some of them might thus be saved. DOUGLAS GOLDRING.

"MONK" LEWIS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I am preparing a study of Matthew Gregory (" Monk ") Lewis (1775–1818), and shall welcome communication with any of your readers who can give me information about him, especially of a biographical nature. Biographers of Lewis have depended largely upon the *Life and Correspondence* (London, 1839) and authorities such as those listed in the DNB. It seems likely that letters to and from Lewis, and other documents concerning him, still exist, perhaps in the possession of the descendants of his two sisters, to whom I shall be very grateful for any information they can give. LOUIS F. PECK.

231 Clermont Avenue,
Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.

Miscellany

THE FINE LADY

SKIRTS with hats, boys, mean nothing in my young life. If a skirt wears a hat, if she wears silkified stockings, or carries a Pekinese on her arm, or has a gold tooth, a fine lady like that, boys, is no skirt for me, but just an empty spot.

Yes, boys, certainly, I've fallen for a fine lady in my time. Paraded down the street with her and taken her to the theatre. And it was in the theatre it all happened. In that very theatre, boys, she unfolded her ideology full volume.

Yes, I met her in the courtyard of our block. At a meeting. I look—there she is, all dolled up. Stockings and all that, a gold tooth.

" Where," I say, " do you come from, citizeness ? What number ? "

" I," she says, " am from No. 7."

" Very well," say I, " carry on."

And somehow, you know, from that very moment, she looked terribly good to me. I began popping in and out of her place. No. 7. Used to call there, of course, on official business. " How," let us say, " citizeness, do you stand about breakdown in your pipes and lavatory ? All in working order ? "

" Yes," she answers, " all in working order."

And she there, just nestling into a comfy shawl, and not another sound out of her. Only her eyes flashing. And the tooth glittering in her mouth. After I'd been calling for a month—she got used to it. Began to answer me back more in detail. " My pipes," she would say, " are working all right, thank you, Grigori Ivanovitch."

Further—friendlier. We started, she and I, parading about the streets. We'd come out on the street, now, and

she'd tell me to take her arm. I catch hold of her under the elbow and trail around after her like a blooming hyena. And what to talk about—I haven't the faintest, and I feel embarrassed in front of everybody.

Now once she up and says to me:

"For why," she says, "are you forever trailing me about the streets? I get quite dizzy. You should," she says, "being a gentleman with a lady friend, and in power, take me somewhere—to the theatre, for example."

"Can do," I say.

And the very next day the com-cell sends tickets for the opera. One ticket I got, and the other Johnny—you know, the fellow who mends the doors in our block—subscribed.

I didn't look at the tickets and they turned out different. My one was to sit downstairs, and Johnny's one was right up in the gallery.

And so we went. Sat in the theatre. She sat on my ticket and I on Johnny's. I sat right up in the sky and couldn't see a ruddy thing. Only if I leant right over the railing I could just manage to see her. But not too well.

I got bored, and bored, and went down. And I look—entreacte. And there she is, walking about amidst the entreacte.

"Howdyoudo?" say I.

"How do you do?"

"It'd be interesting to know," say I, "whether your pipes are still in working order."

"Don't know," she says.

And all the time she keeps edging towards the buffet. I traipse after. She keeps wandering about the buffet and staring at the counter. At a tray on the counter. And at cakes on the tray.

And I, just like a blinking peacock, like one of the unslaughtered bourgeoisie, float all round her and offer her:

"If," I say, "you feel a craving to eat one cake, please do not hesitate. I'll pay."

"Merci," she says.

And then suddenly she walks straight up to the tray with the most depraved walk, swipes a big one with cream and starts stuffing.

Every penny I had on me was three cat's tears. Enough at the most for three cakes. She stuffs, while I frantically feel in my pockets, trying to tell how much money I have. And every penny—didn't amount to a blob nose.

She finishes the one with cream and swipes another. I even managed a cough. But I didn't say a word. That damn-foolish bourgeois shame came all over me. You know, gentleman with a lady sort of thing, and no money.

I go sparring round her like a bantam, and she just giggles and fishes for compliments.

I say:

"Isn't it time for us to go and sit in the theatre? Wasn't that the bell?"

But she says:

"No."

And takes a third.

I say:

"Isn't that a lot, on an empty stomach? Won't you be sick?"

And she:

"No," she says, "we're used to it."

And takes a fourth.

Then the blood rushes to my head.

"*Put-that-back!*" say I.

And she gets frightened. Opens her mouth. And her tooth glitters in it.

It was like the reins getting under my tail. It's done anyway, I think, no more walking out with her.

"*Put-it*—to the devil's mother!" say I.

She puts it back. And I say to the proprietor:

"How much do we owe for three cakes eaten?"

But the proprietor displays indifference—he plays the fool.

"You owe me," he says, "so much for the four cakes eaten."

"How," I say, "for four, when the fourth is there on the tray?"

"No," he replies, "though it may be there on the tray, yet a bite has been made in it—and besides, it's been fingered."

"What," I say, "a bite? Allow me! It's your silly fantasies."

But the proprietor maintains indifference, and gives my face a shove with his fist.

Well, people, of course, collected. Experts. Some say a bite has been made, others say no.

I turn my pockets out, naturally, all sorts of thingummy-bobs topple all over the floor—everyone laughs. But I didn't see anything funny. I was counting my money.

And when I'd got it all counted—I just managed to scrape together enough for four cakes, just. All that row, mother believe me, for nothing.

Settled the bill. Then turned to the lady:

"Finish it up, citizeness," I say. "It's paid for."

But the lady doesn't move. She's shy of finishing it.

And just at this moment some great loafer butts in:

"Let me," he says, "I'll finish it up."

And he finishes it, the great bum. On my money, boys!

We sat back again in the theatre. Saw the damn opera through. And so home.

At the door she says to me:

"I've had enough piggery from you. Those with no money—don't go out with ladies."

I answer back:

"Not in money, citizeness, is happiness. Excuse the expression."

That's how we split.

I don't care for fine ladies.

MIKHAIL ZOSHCHENKO.

(*Translated by I.M. and S.S.N.*).

OVERTIME

AMONGST the ponderous tomes of learning,
Dry texts of Medicine and Law,
With idle thumb the pages turning,
In sudden carnival, I saw,
Revelling forth so sprucely gay
In scarlet liveries, nine or ten
Survivors of a better day—
The flayed anatomies of men;
And marked how well the scalpel's care
Was aided by the painter's tones
To liven with a jaunty air
Their crazy trellises of bones.
In regimental stripes and bands
Each emphasised the cause he serves—
Here was a grenadier of glands
And there a gay hussar of nerves.
And one, his skin peeled off as though
A workman's coat, with surly shrug,
(The flexion of the thews to show)
Treading a shovel, grimly dug.
Dour Sexton, working overtime,
With gristly toes he hooked his spade,
And trenched the very turf and slime
In which he should have long been laid.
The lucky many of the dead—
Their suit of darkness fits them tight,
Buttoned with stars from foot to head
They wear the uniform of Night.
But some for extra shift are due
(And slaves for any fool to blame),
Who with flayed soles, the ages through,
Must push the shovel of their Fame.

ROY CAMPBELL.

THE PROMENADES

THE first fortnight of the Promenades this year has given me very mixed feelings. The first week made a bad beginning. The Monday Wagner night was chiefly notable for the performance of Tchaikovsky's overture-fantasia *Hamlet*, which we do not often hear although it has a certain vitality of expression and invention which keeps it fresh. The Tuesday following was all Tchaikovsky, and the orchestra seemed to me to be playing better than last year in spite of the dismal impression made by the performance of the B.B.C.'s symphony orchestra's leader, Mr. Arthur Catterall, in the Tchaikovsky violin concerto. Nobody has ever claimed that Mr. Catterall was a soloist of extraordinary ability, but I took him to be a much sounder fiddler than he appeared on this occasion. That straightforward competence which usually the name and figure of Mr. Catterall inspires was just what was lacking. "Catterall," one thinks, "that is a good honest English name and here is an upright standing clean-cut fellow with surely no nonsense about him." But that is exactly where one was wrong. Mr. Catterall's performance of the Tchaikovsky violin concerto was all nonsense from beginning to end, and by "nonsense" I mean exactly what I suggest, namely, self-consciousness, affectation, insincerity and feebleness. From a technical point of view Mr. Catterall has first of all a most ungainly style. He does not seem to be able to stand up straight on his feet and put his bow lightly and firmly across the strings. He shuffles and twists, and consequently his tone is coarse, his rhythm unsteady, whilst his phrasing on this occasion was so piecemeal and his interpretation of the music he was playing so non-existent that it was clear he had no conception in his own mind of what he was doing beyond, possibly, the idea: "I, Arthur Catterall, the leader of the B.B.C. orchestra, am playing a concerto." This is not a good enough idea for the London musical public to listen to.

Sir Henry Wood in my experience is not at his best in Bach at the Promenades, so I shall say nothing about the Wednesday night. Nor shall I pass any comments on the first of the British nights, which was not more enlivened by the first performance of Mr. Edgar Bainton's *Epithalamion*, or by Mr. Frank Bridge's blowing of bugles than by Mr. Arnold Bax's Symphony No. 3. The second week contained no British night, but there were some admirable programmes as compensation, including Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* on the Tuesday, a fine Brahms Wednesday programme, a Schubert programme on the Thursday, and one of Beethoven's more rarely performed pianoforte concertos, No. 1 (actually No. 2 in order of composition) in C major, played by Mr. Cyril Smith, on the Friday.

Now, during the whole of this second week the playing of the orchestra was really excellent, and music lovers have to thank Sir Henry Wood for a great deal of pleasure. It seems to me that the playing is very greatly superior to that of last year. When I said above that Sir Henry Wood was not usually at his best in a Bach programme I was touching on the defect which mars so many of his performances —that of a heavy-handed lack of subtlety. So often I have heard Sir Henry hack his way mechanically through a symphony, driving his orchestra as if it were not a team of musical thoroughbreds but of spavined and knock-kneed carthorses who could only be kept going through sheer driving force. But, suddenly, this year Sir Henry has dropped all that. He has been allowing the orchestra to feel itself moving and has held the reins firmly but lightly with an enormous increase in elasticity and subtlety. The improvement in the string tone is remarkable, and it is a pleasure to hear the orchestra playing crisply and lightly. The performances have also been more straightforward and accurate, and I am pleased to see that some of the best of modern influences are at work. There is less attempt at finding new and melodramatic readings of the old masterpieces. The music is not pulled about so much, and the tendency towards fidelity to the text and the composer's own markings is increasingly evident, Exact, precise, lively and vital musicianship is becoming more and more appreciated for its own sake, and the vices of sentimentality, of exaggeration, of self-consciousness and affectation are less conspicuous.

A particular example of the general improvement in musical taste was Mr. Cyril Smith's performance of the Beethoven C major pianoforte concerto. This concerto had never to my knowledge been played in London during the last fifteen years until Mr. Schnabel reintroduced it, although it is a work of extraordinary beauty. To play it adequately needs true musical faith, especially in the *largo*, which has to be properly understood and felt and sustained throughout its slow amplitude by a deep sense of rhythmic balance or it will fail completely. Mr. Cyril Smith was particularly good here, and his grasp never once wavered. Throughout, his playing was clean, crisp and truly musical, and although he did not present the last movement in its full dancing vitality his was an honest, capable and musicianly performance such as refreshes all who hear it and gives one a new confidence in young English musicians.

Sir Henry Wood's performance of the Beethoven A major symphony had similar merits. If Sir Henry continues on his present path of recovery—greater lightness of touch, more elasticity, delicacy and springiness with a careful refraining from any underlining of points or over-emphasis of any sort, we shall all have a great deal more pleasure in listening to his performances than we have had in the past.

W. J. TURNER.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Too Little Life.

THERE were periods in Mr. van Druten's *Behold, We Live!* at the St. James's Theatre, when I expected Gerald du Maurier to turn eagerly to Gertrude Lawrence and say: "Isn't this all rather flat, Gertrude? Rather thin? I know some good parts—there's Shand, and a policeman and a fellow called Drummond, there's"—a little wistfully he'd say this, with appealing courage—"there's even Captain Hook. And you must know some good things, too. Couldn't we break out of these private lives, and still make something of this play? I'm sure van Druten means well, but his writing's like a weak wash-drawing. I wish I were back in *Dear Brutus*. Really, I did act—once." He never does so break out, and he never acts in *Behold, We Live!* The play is at once an attack on suicide and a defence of true love: but to pull those two immense themes off in a stage play needs more real people and a more intense, hidden style than Mr. van Druten can command. He ran a risk when Miss Lawrence was cast for a serious part; so did she, and neither of them can compass the difficulties of his unaccented style and her naively sophisticated temperament. She is never a woman with years of married misery behind her: though Mr. Ronald Ward was excellent as her drunken, bully of a husband, Miss Lawrence plays as if her Tono had never imbibed anything stronger than milk, and a little negus at parties. She is girlish and immature where she should be wise, experienced and passionately grateful for her salvation by Gordon Evers (Gerald du Maurier). There are moments of pleasant light comedy in the play. Miss Eileen Peel is splendidly fatuous as the chittering wife of a silent husband, portrayed a shade too sullenly by Mr. Alexander Archdale; and Dame May Whitty does all that is required of her as Evers's mother. But there is neither force nor conviction in the play. None of the persons is seen in the round—they have neither past nor future, and the drama drifts on in a series of conversations that are characterless and tediously actual.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Promenade Concert, nightly, Queen's Hall, 8.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THERE are those among our still existent emotionalists who regard the modern passion for biography as a proof that we are immersed in materialism and unbelief. True it is that, according as our credulity regarding the after-life declines, so does our interest increase in the strange habits of man upon this mortal earth. The great religious epochs have produced the worst biographies: it is in the transitional periods between one synthesis and the next that the analytical art of biography produces its brightest blooms. To-day, in spite of much flotsam and jetsam, it is a powerful current more illustrative perhaps than we ourselves can recognise of the obscure tide upon which the modern temperament is floating towards dim horizons. It is something more than a mere facet of modern literary fashion: it is a factor, and a formative factor, in the modern state of mind. Lytton Strachey, for all his negations, for all the reaction which his success is even now producing, has exercised upon the generation of 1900–1930 an influence more potent than is generally admitted. His imitators have popularised, and often vulgarised, his astringent criticism: the result has been showy, but unfortunate: yet a residue of real value remains: there remains a constant preoccupation with the human as opposed to the super-human, with reality as opposed to legend. There remains the scientific, as distinct from the emotional, method of approach. And that, since we do live in an analytical age, is all to the good. If we can only pick things to pieces, let us at least do so neatly.

* * *

Inevitably this popularisation of biography has led to a spate of popular biographies. We in this country have not as yet sunk to the level of the *La Vie Amoureuse*. . . . series which in France has scored so marked a bookstall success. None the less we have had our lapses, and the danger of an extensive vulgarisation of biography is not yet over. It is for this reason that I warmly welcome the enterprise of Peter Davies, Limited, in producing a biographical series which, while popular in form and price, is intelligently conceived and, in many cases, intelligently executed. I have of late been reading several of these biographies with much appreciation. In almost every case they have been entrusted to specialists working upon familiar ground: they are in general temperate, scholarly, readable, lucid and instructive: each separate volume is admirably produced, sensibly bound and illustrated, and available for the very moderate price of five shillings. As a publishing venture this series deserves unstinted praise: it is the sort of thing that we in Great Britain do much better than it could be done in France or Germany. I urge all those who are as yet unacquainted with this series to lose no time in repairing their omission. The Peter Davies series should become a popular habit.

* * *

It would be invidious, in dealing with a series which embraces authors as varied as Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell and Sir John Fortescue, as Mr. John Buchan and M. André Maurois, to discriminate too nicely between the relative merits of the separate monographs. It is, I know, a dispiriting task to compress within some 150 pages the reading and research entailed in the preparation of any honest essay in biography. The need of foreshortening necessitates a sharp perspective, and the temptation is urgent to render that perspective an acute and original angle of vision. In but few instances have the contributors to this series surrendered to this temptation. For the most part they have recognised from the outset that a whole portrait of their subject is not within their terms of reference. They have thus attempted only a "drawing in outline" and, as Miss Mona Wilson says of her own *Queen Elizabeth*, their "single aim has been to make that outline accurate." Such simplification entails inevitably the omission of many shades and cross-lights: in dealing with figures with whom we are abundantly familiar, such omissions may irritate or at least disconcert: yet only the most captious or scholarly among us could read this series without feeling that in almost every instance a real unity of impression has been achieved, and that this impression, admitting the restriction of 150 pages, is reliable and just. Mr. John Buchan, perhaps, has been too intent on rendering his sketch of *Julius Caesar* a rattling good story, nor is he sufficiently sensitive to those areas in the character of his hero which do not harmonise with the tenets of British manhood. Mr. Clifford Bax, in his clever study of *Leonardo da Vinci*, has been hampered by a desire to explain that neurotic in terms of German psychological analysis. And Mr. Maxton, in spite of his fine aloofness, has at moments blurred the outline of his *Lenin*. Yet each of these books should be commended, Mr. Buchan's for its lucidity: Mr. Maxton's for its splendid conclusion (as fine a piece of restrained prose as I have read in a year): and Mr. Bax's for its gay ingenuity, for the disturbing, and usually amusing, suggestions which it evokes.

* * *

There are, however, three monographs in this series which I should commend as models of this type of biography. The first is Miss Mona Wilson's *Queen Elizabeth*, the second Mr. Laurence Binyon's *Akbar*, and the third M. Maurois' *Voltaire*.

Miss Mona Wilson has drawn her outline with a firm, yet delicate, pencil. Her sense of values never deserts her, and although the background is indicated with a few heavy lines, it never detracts from the central portrait, and never interferes with the central impression. Mr. Laurence Binyon, for his part, does not permit his scholarship to do more than peep at the reader at odd moments, a coy and modest little peep, enticing us farther, evoking appetite and not repletion. Mr. Binyon sets out, as does Miss Wilson, to give us a "portrait of the man rather than the story of his doings." The resultant portrait is vivid and convincing. Mr. Binyon indulges in no flourishes or conceits: he tells his story intelligently, lucidly, and with a tranquillity which leaves behind it a most soothing effect. Few books of this size can offer so much profit and pleasure. The *Voltaire* of M. André Maurois is a more ambitious endeavour, and as such will arouse more controversy. M. Maurois is not accorded in his own country that honour which has been lavished upon him in Great Britain and the United States. It will soon become the fashion among our more snobbish intellectuals to confess that in their eyes also Maurois enjoys an inflated reputation. I do not agree. I consider André Maurois to be a writer of great intelligence and commendable honesty. "The poor man," he says of Voltaire, "did not know how to be dull. How could he be taken seriously?" There is a touch of autobiography in this comment, a very human touch. Yet I for one shall always refuse to regard M. Maurois as superficial merely because he is so entertaining, since his greatest gift is a genius for selection. Observe, for instance, how in this short study of Voltaire he tells all the anecdotes which are illustrative of his central theme and omits all the anecdotes which, however amusing, would smudge the delicate outline which he traces. He tells us how Voltaire loathed the oxen in the lanes round Ferney. "They walk too slowly. It doesn't suit my vivacity." The whole of Voltaire lives in that outburst: yet, as an anecdote, it is not among the most impressive. This selective quality renders M. Maurois much more than a mere showman: it renders him an interpreter of great achievement.

HAROLD NICOLSON.

THIS GREAT TRADITION

The Fortress. By HUGH WALPOLE. Macmillan. 10s. 6d.

We know that there is the great tradition of the English novel, for we are continually being reminded of it. Into its ample bosom disappear, handsomely praised and easily forgotten, many works of various degrees of merit with one characteristic in common: they must be long. Genius is not infectious, but the defects of the great can be comfortably followed, and if we do not admire length and breadth, without height or depth, we can be condemned as un-English. In spite of Sterne, in spite of Jane Austen, brevity and malice are regarded as Latin characteristics, and the great tradition, to quote a Scottish judge on another subject, has bequeathed a habit of "exhausting time and encroaching upon eternity."

I am not suggesting for a moment that most of the masterpieces of the world have not been long; but they have throbbed with the pulse of some inner excitement, and the last page has always represented to the reader a moment of mourning, a sense of personal loss.

Careless and slipshod, overlapping and repetitive, the great may sometimes have been; but it is not these characteristics that have constituted their greatness, complacently emulated by their disciples and admirers though they may be. The wretched reader is drugged by the suggestion that a large canvas implies a wide vision, and that a mass of characters shows a varied curiosity about human beings. This is not always so. Tolstoy with a last word in every paragraph can use as many words as he pleases. He will give to each a weight of finality. Scott may be diffuse and Trollope pedestrian but we are always avid for more. Every great work creates and satisfies hunger. Not having read any of the Herries series I approached *The Fortress* with a fresh mind. Nor is it difficult to pick up the threads. Mr. Walpole is always explicit. We know at once that Judith Paris is to dominate the scene. She is certainly the most vivid figure in the book with a delightful conglomeration of characteristics, high-spirited, gaiety-loving, sardonic, courageous and inflexible; but we feel that we should recognise her more easily on a stage than in a street (Mr. Walpole invariably provides her with footlights), whereas we could disagree with their own creators about the colouring of Elizabeth Bennett and Natasha, sure that it is *we* who are right. Her passionate love for her son Adam should be infinitely moving, but in the four minutes' scene between father and son in the last act of *Young Woodley* we get the stab of a human relationship which the 811 pages of *The Fortress* never provides. The other actors in the family tragedy are all one-adjective characters. Walter is gross, Elizabeth is lovely, Margaret is single-minded, John is sensitive, Dorothy is placidly obstinate, Benjie is charmingly reckless, Uhland, the cripple who shoots first his brother-in-law and then himself (he took care of, without loving, maimed animals—a recognised attribute of villains), is malignant. They never let their author down by deviating a hair from the characteristics that he has imposed upon them—in other words they never flutter with the irrational inconsequence of human beings. Perhaps they know that it is not their business to lapse into real life.

For the Emily Brontë-Hardy atmosphere essential to Mr. Walpole's theme (there is a not very successful Jane Austen interlude in Islington) tension is necessary, and throughout the book tension is totally lacking. Fate does not brood. We know, because it has been made so abundantly clear to us, that disaster is coming; but it casts no shadow. The family feud is not a chasm, a deep malignant cleavage, but a line drawn by the author between two groups of people. Uhland is a sinister figure who is going to do mischief, but when he murders John he fulfils our expectations without arousing in us either terror or pity.

Mr. Walpole's is the way of explanation rather than of revelation. He wishes to give us the picture of a period, and so anxious is he to prove to us that he knows which period he is writing about that we are continually treated to the quieter passages of Mr. Guedalla. Public figures are mentioned (with the Mister duly inserted) and public events described. In his account of the Great Exhibition Mr. Walpole insures against himself by giving us the version of a pompous Captain; but we could wish for the late Mr. Massingham to describe the Chartist Meeting and for Mr. Arthur Brisbane to give us a report of the prize fight:

> Nor was their Cause ignoble, for they were showing to all the world that their countries had strength and courage, restraint and control, fairness of mind and an honest cheerfulness . . .

Olympic Games Committee and League of Nations Union please copy.

It is interesting to compare *The Fortress* with Miss Kate O'Brien's *Without My Cloak*. Her method is not unlike Mr. Walpole's. She, too, repeats and explains, overlaying her characters with unnecessary detail. But the shimmer and the sheen of beauty are always there, the sensuous and the lyrical lurk in ambush liable at any moment to spring on us a lovely surprise.

Mr. Walpole has heard of passion and he tells us of it. But as it never appears to have quickened his imagination it is never communicated to the reader. His prose sags: the reins are never tightened. We amble in a steady canter without so much as a gallop or a halt. There are sentences like "Sad to say, Judith was not at all moved as was Rodney's son" and "Not that he disliked Ellis, or he would not did he not patronise him," but more dulling to the mind are the foreseeable and glib metaphors ("his nostrils quivering . . . like a high-bred horse").

There is nothing more irritating than a simile that is only used in order to startle our attention; and far too many of Mr. Walpole's harps are like water. Nor does he seem to be really interested in his characters. He likes them when they are commonplace and he can laugh at them, and he likes them when they are picturesque and he can underline them; but he steers clear of the half-shades which demand vision and give life. It is only nature that shocks him into beauty and sincerity. Then intensity and beauty flash into his writing. His clouds and his stones are far more animate than his human beings, and, lest I should seem unjust in my criticism of his book, I will end by quoting what is to me infinitely the best passage in it:

> It was a country, he said, of *clouds* and *stones*. Stone walls, grey clouds, stone-coloured seagulls on dark fields like fragments of white stone, streaks of snow in winter, thin cloth of stone, and above these stony crags pinnacles of stone, needles of stone, piercing a stony sky. He learned to see a small imprisoned valley, wind-swept, as a living thing subject to growth and decay like himself. Through this vale twisted the mountain torrent fighting with stones, letting its life be dominated by these piling stones that heaped themselves one on another, that fell in showers down the hillside, that at length perhaps choke the life of the stream and form a stony pathway that leads at last to new shapes of grass and moss and fern. The clouds feeding the streams, the streams fighting the stones, life moving ceaselessly from form to form, from pattern to pattern.

ELIZABETH BIBESCO.

A VICTORIAN PESSIMIST

The City of Dreadful Night and Other Poems. By JAMES THOMSON. With a preface by HENRY S. SALT. Watts. 1s.

Secularism, it would appear, makes strange bed-fellows. "By secularists . . ." writes Mr. Henry S. Salt, prefacing the twenty-eighth volume of *The Thinker's Library*, "James Thomson's memory should be treasured: the more so because on his shoulders the mantle of Shelley descended as a singer of Free-thought." Among combinations attempted by literary critics there can seldom have been a less happily assorted twain; Ariel with a crack in his splendid voice, Caliban who had attended a council school. . . .

Thomson's strength, such as it was, came from the earth. The rancorous energy which lends his verse its occasional charm suggests the virulence of Prospero's maltreated slave who used language to curse his master and all his doings. *The City of Dreadful Night*, at its rare best, resembles the movement of a small but swollen torrent, carrying down a confused freight of rocks and mud. Too often some obstacle stems its path, and it is dammed up into a tumultuous and turgid backwater. Then again it brims over and struggles free. It has no lightness, no eloquence of the romantic kind, no classic sweep that carries all before it. Thomson took little pleasure in words; but he had a "message" and the message formed his poem, a protest to deliver, and in that protest was concentrated the abundant bitterness of his own life:

> Lo, thus, as prostrate "In the dust I write
> My heart's deep languor and my soul's sad tears."
> Yet why evoke the spectres of black night
> To blot the sunshine of exultant years? . . .

Because a cold rage seizes one at whiles
To show the bitter old and wrinkled truth
Stripped naked of all vesture that beguiles,
False dreams, false hopes, false masks and modes of youth;
Because it gives some sense of power and passion
In helpless impotence to try to fashion
Our woe in living words howe'er uncouth.

Those closing lines help to explain his æsthetic failure. Art has been exploited by many artists—is exploited by every artist more or less—as a counterbalance to the weight of personal disappointments. But it cannot be exploited for that purpose alone; and the poet or the prose-writer who employs his art "because it gives a sense of power and passion" to ease his pride in a surge of rhetorical railing must expect to dull his artistry as he proceeds. Thomson's impassioned pessimism loses its force when we realise that it had become his chief vocation.

Not that he was specious or insincere. Few poems give so painful an impression of a writer who puts his utmost into his work, who wrestles almost physically with a burden of meaning. He *will* speak!—the heavy stanzas lumber along, now harsh and awkward to the point of cacophony, now transfigured by some crude but powerful image, "of the earth earthy" as all about it:

A river girds the city west and south,
The main north channel of a broad lagoon,
Regurging with the salt tides from the mouth;
Waste marshes shine and glister to the moon
For leagues, then moorland black, then stony ridges;
Great piers and causeways, many noble bridges,
Connect the town and islet suburbs strewn.

A foggy city; endless files of glimmering street lamps burn in an immense acreage of darkened houses. It is a sort of nightmare London, after all, the projection of a grim Victorian metropolis, seen through the eyes of a drunken army-schoolmaster as he wandered back to the Pimlico slum in which he lodged.

Essentially he was the product of his time. Crude optimism needed the counterpart of crude pessimism; and Thomson emerged as naturally from Victorian life as a bilious headache follows over indulgence in rich food. He was symptomatic, but perhaps nothing more. One has only to compare *The City of Dreadful Night* with Baudelaire's no less murky *Tableaux Parisiens* to see the melodramatic thinness of Thomson's style. His gloom is as damp and diffuse as a London fog; Baudelaire's is the quintessential spleen. PETER QUENNELL.

LYAUTEY'S TONQUIN LETTERS

Intimate Letters from Tonquin. By MARSHAL LYAUTEY. Lane. 15s.

These letters were written by Lyautey to a group of personal friends at the most decisive period of his life—when he was sent out to Tonquin with the unimportant rank of a major of cavalry in 1894. His *rôle sociale* had attracted the pleased attention of the more advanced members of the intelligentsia, and the sulky mutterings of the general staff. It was for the latter reason that an influential friend pulled the strings which sent him out to the Far East.

From the very beginning these news-letters (they were never intended to be *private*, but to be passed round among his *cercle*) show a refreshing enthusiasm compared with his earlier plaints about the restrictions and dullness of the army as a profession. He met men on his way out who were returning to the colonies which they had helped to form. He observed with admiration and suspicion the activities of the English in Egypt (the Fashoda incident), their fortifications at Port Said, their spacious cantonments at Singapore; and made no bones about the inadequacy of the French equivalents. Almost as soon as he had arrived in Tonquin he was made Chief of Staff, and his duties took him from Hanoi on a survey of the frontier posts on the Chinese border. Here he met Colonel Gallieni, whose vigour and enterprise proved a lasting influence in his life.

The letters themselves are well written and sensitive, and reveal him as an observant and highly cultured man; but, owing to the nature of their contents, they display little more than a patriotism in the broader sense of the word and an unsatisfied ambition. They are almost purely concerned with the military and political conditions obtaining in the colony, and with the methodical lack of vision of the home authorities. But it is abundantly clear that he was already laying the foundations of that clear-sighted policy which brought peace and prosperity to Morocco. Lyautey was taught by de Lanessan, governor of Tonquin on his arrival there, that government is best carried on by adopting the native institutions wherever possible, and by ruling through the native magistrate, rather than by imposing a foreign legislation upheld by force of arms. And he never forgot this excellent lesson. Later in Morocco he was to prove himself a patron of the indigent civilisation, and encourage it to expand side by side with that of the French. For the rest, Lyautey's Tonquin letters are horribly badly translated. One has only to compare them with the original extracts from M. Maurois' *Lyautey* to see how horribly. Even a reviewer need be no linguist to recognise that the expression *Mon Dieu* is not best rendered into English as By Jove. But the book does present the English reader with a view of the formative years of a great man's life.

A CRITIC OF THE POST OFFICE

Post Office Reform. By VISCOUNT WOLMER, M.P. Nicholson and Watson. 6s.

Lord Wolmer after five years at the Post Office came out as a virulent critic of that institution and all its ways, and he has now embodied his complaints and conclusions in a book. In his first chapter he gives us the viewpoint of an Under Secretary and incidentally provides the key to his whole attitude. With the temperament of a reformer he found himself condemned to serve under a P.M.G. whose policy was, according to Lord Wolmer, "to work the machine as he found it and to institute such reforms as the opportunities and circumstances of the moment, in his judgment, afforded." The greater part of this book is taken up with showing how mistaken that judgment was.

It is, in fact, a damning indictment of Lord Selsdon, better known as Sir W. Mitchell-Thomson, although the author out of loyalty credits his chief with all the good things done while attributing all errors of commission and omission to a convenient abstraction called "The Post Office." Thus while Lord Selsdon gets the credit for completing the Post Office railway, it is the stupid officials who neglected to order up-to-date plant. He, too, is the author of the Cash on Delivery system, conceded after years of agitation by the Postal Workers, while the neglect to develop the commercial side of the telephone or to create better relations with the staff is of course due to the Department.

Here is one of the main defects of the book. Lord Wolmer starts with the thesis that the constitution of the Post Office needs altering. He had compiled when in office a number of instances of alleged failure, but had never taken the trouble to analyse them, to see which were due to the constitution of the Post Office, which were inherent in a very large organisation, and which were caused by remediable defects of internal structure. He puts down everything to State control.

The book suffers throughout from bias. Pages are taken up with old grievances long since remedied, but set out to prejudice the issue. He even inserts an unnecessary life of Rowland Hill in order to show up the obscurantism of the Government in the past. Lord Wolmer's own knowledge is far from being up to date. He produces his old comparison of the engineering costs in the U.S.A. and this country, oblivious of the great changes in method which have taken place since 1929. He is similarly ignorant of the alterations of the Greater London Postal area. He is content to compare American telephone development in 1930, the height of the boom, with our own in a period of slump, ignorant of the enormous decline in American telephone users in the last two years. These instances could be multiplied many times.

It is a pity that Lord Wolmer should have wasted so much of his space on this special pleading, for the result is that his examination of Post Office problems is superficial and his discussion of the best form of organisation for State-owned industries wholly inadequate. There is a case for an alteration of the constitution of the Post Office, but in order to support it it is not necessary to prove that the Post Office is thoroughly inefficient. This is what Lord Wolmer has tried to do. He is obsessed with the superiority of the commercial man over the civil servant, a delusion very common in persons of little acquaintance with business.

He rightly draws attention to the evils of Treasury control, the bad effects of utilising the Post Office as a tax-collecting agency, and the ineffectiveness and indeed the harmfulness of what passes for Parliamentary control; but he fails to realise the extent

to which reform within the present system is possible and is actually taking place. It is characteristic that while devoting two chapters to the telephones he fails to note the real defect, the lack of an adequate selling organisation, which is now being remedied. His greatest failure, however, is when he comes to propound his scheme of reform. He gives an uncritical survey of recent developments in State control, such as the B.B.C. and the Central Electricity Board, in a chapter called rather pretentiously "The Problem of Socialised Industry," and then, after stating that the public is sick of Post Office inefficiency, with a rare streak of humour suggests as a model to be followed those monuments of efficiency, the railway companies.

Making an unsound division of the functions of the Post Office into governmental and commercial, he proposes quite unnecessarily to hand over the former, which consists of mere agency work such as selling insurance stamps, to the Treasury, while he entrusts all commercial activities, including the Mails, to a Board of Directors. These directors are to be appointed by the Government in the first instance, but ultimately by stockholders who subscribe to capital issues made by the Post Office. This irresponsible body is to be checked in the interests of the general public by another irresponsible body formed on the model of the Railway and Canal Commission. Parliamentary Control vanishes. Policy passes to this Board of Directors.

Thus, instead of the ultimate control being in the hands of an unwieldy body of 615 elected members of Parliament, it will in future be exercised by some fifty or a hundred thousand stockholders who will elect the directors and make their criticisms at an annual general meeting, to be held presumably at some convenient place such as one of the larger football grounds, which will provide adequate seating accommodation. It is clear that Lord Wolmer has devoted very little attention to the major problem facing industry, State and private—namely, how to secure a continuously efficient directorate—or he would not have made so puerile a suggestion.

Lord Wolmer recognises that nineteenth century machinery is no longer suitable for twentieth century problems, yet he is so wedded to nineteenth century capitalism that he must needs try to turn the Post Office into a limited company. While there are other proposals in the book worthy of consideration, one closes it with a feeling of disappointment that such reforming zeal should be mated with so little constructive ability.

C. R. ATTLEE.

THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Geography of the Mediterranean Region: Its Relation to Ancient History. By ELLEN CHURCHILL SEMPLE. Constable. 21s.

Geography, a subject regarded by most of us with distaste because of the particularly dreary hours devoted to it in childhood, has become one of the most fascinating arts. During the short period over which we can trace the history of human business, physical facts, climate, the presence of minerals and fisheries, the existence of harbours and passes have been the most decisive causes; and for every Alexander who has deflected the course of history by a whim, there have been untold millions of men whose conduct has been strictly determined by the nature of their habitat. It was not a face that burned the topless towers of Ilium, it was big business; for Troy was economically a key situation at the entrance to the Dardanelles, commanding a short land-route which replaced a channel made almost unnavigable by currents and winds, and controlling the Euxine trade as well as the Hellespont fisheries. Helen, in fact, was the combination of an isthmus and a tunny-fish. For if history is economics, economics are geography.

As the subject of a geographical study the Mediterranean is unique not only in the richness of its documents but in the variety of its history. Miss Semple has written a fascinating book, which cannot be recommended too strongly to everyone interested in Palestine, Greece, Rome, or even the Cap d'Antibes. Whenever you open it you come upon some curious fact not generally known. Bohemia, for instance, actually had two sea-coasts for a short while in the thirteenth century, when its King, Ottocar, extended his rule from the top of the Adriatic to the Baltic, and founded Königsberg. In Rome an irrigation channel was called a *rivus*, and all persons who participated in its water-rights *rivales*, their jealous competition bequeathing to us the word "rival." Malaria first entered Europe during the Second Punic War. When criminals were thrown over a cliff into the sea as a sacrifice to the Apollo of the Leucadian Promontory birds were tied to them to break their fall, and fishermen waited to rescue them if they survived. Such facts as these continually recur to illustrate Miss Semple's theme, which is the influence of the Mediterranean basin upon the lives of its ancient inhabitants.

Navigation has been practised in this sea from the remotest antiquity. The indentation of the coast encouraged the early sailors to steer directly from one cape to another, and the pellucid air made the mountainous islands and high headlands visible for great distances. Mount Athos, for instance, threw a shadow on to Lemnos forty miles away, and it was possible to cross the Mediterranean without losing sight of land. But in classical times the sailing season remained short, and only in emergencies were voyages undertaken between the middle of November and the middle of March. Without natural harbours, a mountainous and visible coast, or timber for constructing ships, Egypt remained a land power till it was hellenised by Alexander. But Greeks and Phœnicians planted their colonies along all the coasts from Colchis to the Pillars of Hercules, and Mediterranean civilisation began with the thalassocracy of Crete. The Mediterranean climate is homogeneous enough to have made colonisation attractive: a Greek could be happy with his olives, vines and figs, on almost every coast, and the olive grows even on parts of the Euxine coast. Miss Semple gives reason for not accepting Ellsworth Huntington's theory that a change of climate has occurred to which the decline of Mediterranean civilisation can be attributed. Drought has always been the chief difficulty, especially on the Eastern coasts: in Palestine, for instance, the rainfall is inadequate, on an average, one year in every five. Hence the chief Mediterranean gods were always weather gods; the Bible is packed with references to the beauty and desirability of springs and brooks and wells. These raingods, Miss Semple writes, "were irascible deities, especially Jehovah. The divine tempers varied with the variability of the rainfall and tended to increase in serenity from the Eastern to the Western end of the Mediterranean region." The aridity of Greece rendered corn, meat and timber very rare, and Athens developed her naval power to command the sea route to the fertile shores of the Euxine. The comparative greenness of Arcadia has made it a symbol for a paradise, and the moist rich land of Bœotia produced a race notorious to the other Greeks for their slow farmer wits. In most parts of the Mediterranean the rainfall is not so much scarce as seasonal. There are thirty-two inches of rain annually at Naples, more than in most parts of England, thirty-four at Palermo, fifty-one at Genoa. But the summer drought everywhere makes irrigation imperative, and behind the Southern garden we always see, as Miss Semple points out, the engineer with his problems of hydraulic pressure.

The Mediterranean basin is a geographical unit separated from the surrounding continents by mountains and deserts, and the breaches in these barriers were always important on account both of the danger of invasion and the possibility of valuable trade. The Hellespont, the Pear Tree pass to the Carso and the Rhone valley are the main gates from the North, and through these a trade in amber percolated from the earliest times: Baltic amber has been found in the ruins of Knossos and Troy. But the trade-route to the East was the most important, for here were the ancient empires from which the young civilisation of Greece learnt its luxury. The isthmus of Suez, the deserts of Arabia and Syria, the Taurus mountains formed impassable barriers, but there was a land route along Southern Asia Minor and a sea route to Northern Syria, which converged on the one great gateway to the Orient, the Syrian Saddle, with a practicable piedmont road leading to the Euphrates and the Tigris. Miss Semple gives a map showing how each great Power in turn incorporated the country commanding this invaluable route, Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Hittites, Persians, Romans and Saracens. It was the route of Alexander after Issus, it was the route the Germans planned for their railway to Bagdad.

Pirates and gardens, volcanoes and earthquakes, wells and fisheries, all the physical features of Mediterranean life are discussed in Miss Semple's book, and illustrated by quotations from the Bible and the Classics. One of the most romantic geographic characteristics of the Basin is its prodigality of caves, eroded by wind or surf in the limestone hills. These were used as houses, sheepcotes, and shrines; Elijah and David at times, like Aeolus, were troglodytes. The persistence of religious legend

runs through Miss Semple's book. We see St. Elias replacing the old raingods in their mountain homes, St. Nicholas assuming the role of Poseidon and Apollo on the promontories, and the Madonna, Stella Maris, worshipped at the ancient shrine of Aphrodite at Eryx, where the doves still flutter round the sanctuary.

Such unchanging features of Mediterranean life, closely associated with its unchanged geography, play a predominant part in Miss Semple's pages. They also inspire a nostalgic love for the shores of the Central Sea in every European conscious of the origins of his civilisation. A classical education may leave one with little Latin and less Greek, but it is apt to make one fall in love at first sight with the peacock bays and terraced olive-orchards of the South. But the dominant position of the Basin in human history has come, on the contrary, from the appetite for change with which it has infected its inhabitants. The meeting place of three continents, this sea, so far from being an obstacle to travel, provided in antiquity an admirable medium for inquisitive intercourse between different societies. Whereas the great continental civilisations remained static, the Mediterranean world, subject to a variety of influences, was continually changing. Their needs made the Greeks travel, and it was the curiosity roused by their travels which led them to develop the supreme instrument of civilisation, the use of reason. The science by which we live was born of a marriage between an arid soil and a navigable sea. RAYMOND MORTIMER.

IRISH HISTORY RECONSIDERED

Ireland: Dupe or Heroine. By LORD MIDLETON, K.P. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

It is interesting to learn that the late Lord Balfour, being pained in his last days by the prevalence of false impression concerning Anglo-Irish history, enjoined upon the author of this book the task of giving to the world a "truer" version of the facts. Lord Midleton is neither a practised historian nor a writer of exceptional talent; and his attempt in this book to reproduce the deceptively philosophic outlook of his master is not wholly satisfactory. But the book is decidedly interesting, partly on account of a very real independence of judgment and partly for the recital which it contains of the important and creditable part played by its author in Irish events of the last twenty years. Lord Midleton is one of the last of the great Anglo-Irish with large stakes in both islands; though an English politician and an absentee, he has been, as he quaintly says, "associated with Irish property all his life," and for that reason was Chairman of the Southern Unionists at the Irish Convention of 1917, when he engaged in a brave but hopeless contest with Orangemen on one flank and Roman Catholic Bishops on the other. He might have appropriately told the reader of his ancestor, the first Lord Midleton, who also liked to choose his own path—that Whiggish Lord Chancellor, suspected by Walpole and the English interest, who objected to Swift's *Universal Use of Irish Manufactures* much as the present peer objects to Mr. De Valera's nationalist economics, and yet joined in the agitation against Swift's halfpence and was the recipient of the fifth *Drapier Letter*.

The book, in its practical intention, is addressed to Irishmen rather than to Englishmen, in so far as the two material questions which Lord Midleton poses, and for which he seeks an answer in the "teachings of history," are concerned. These are the extent to which the restrictions of the settlement of 1921 may be of disadvantage to the Free State and the limits to which we should be carried by the doctrine of self-determination. By "we" Lord Midleton must mean the Irish, since, in fact, in his pages the question of English necessities in regard to her neighbour never leaves the background. The Chairman of the Irish Southern Unionists can hardly regard the settlement of 1921 as an "ideal solution," or even a national settlement; but, the loss of Ulster apart, he argues with reason that such restrictions as English policy imposed on the march of the Southern Irish in 1921 should not be of serious account to Irish common sense. Even if they were all removed, as Mr. De Valera desires, overnight, Ireland would not automatically become a nation. Thus we may say that from a concretely nationalist standpoint Mr. Cosgrave's policy had greater merits than that pursued by the present Free State Government, just because it was a more liberal policy which did not lay a one-sided emphasis on the will, nor demand of dissident Irishmen sudden conversions, but recognised that the consent which goes to make a national consciousness must be, as Renan said, the silent consent of every day.

But in historical argument Lord Midleton is not so convincing as when he writes of his own experience; general questions such as these—whether Ireland's backwardness up to the Union was due to her lack of independence, and whether she could under any government have progressed better than she did in the latter half century of the Union?—can be only answered by saying that they ought not to be asked. What is known is that English intervention in Irish politics has been frequently distinguished by a reckless ineptitude (read Lord Midleton's account of his own experiences in this regard at the Convention, and consider the present tariff reprisals), excusable only on the ground (Boyle's saying is quoted by Lord Midleton at the head of one of his chapters) that as it was in 1630 so it is three centuries later: the "body of Ireland" is still estranged from English statesmen by "bad communications and the Papist influence." In the last fifty years of the Union, and on the material as distinct from the political side, we may agree with Lord Midleton that Great Britain did, and notably in the Tory administrations of Peel and Balfour, show good will to her neighbour; but it is preposterous to excuse British policy in the eighteenth century, a mere mercantilist exploitation of Ireland, Protestant and Catholic alike, by arguing that it had no peculiar malignity, that it conformed to the common standards of the time and should not be judged by the more democratic or more philanthropic ideas of our day. The then generally prevalent notion of the benefit of religious uniformity may account for the Penal Laws; but the attempt to take from the Irish people the very means of earning their food, and to destroy all chances of a happy and prosperous union of two (admittedly) sister-kingdoms presents features of "peculiar malignity" that are unique. J. M. HONE.

ARS UNA

The Civilisations of the East. By RENÉ GROUSSET. **Vol. I. The Near or Middle East. Vol. II. India.** Hamish Hamilton. 25s. each.

Asiatic Mythology. By J. HACKIN. Harrap. £3 3s.

The Quattro Cento. Part One: FLORENCE AND VERONA. By ADRIAN STOKES. Faber and Faber. 25s.

A History of English Art in the Middle Ages. By O. E. SAUNDERS. Oxford University Press. 12s. 6d.

St. Thomas Becket in Art. By TANCRED BORENIUS. Methuen. 12s. 6d.

Rembrandt. By ARTHUR M. HIND. Oxford University Press. £2 2s.

The Villages of England. By A. K. WICKHAM. Batsford. 12s. 6d.

Twelfth Night. By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. Illustrated by ERIC RAVILIOUS. Golden Cockerel Press. £3 3s.

Clervis and Belamie. By CHRISTOPHER AND LETTICE SANDFORD. The Boar's Head: Heathercombe. £1 1s.

We have lost a great deal, no doubt, in intensity of appreciation and excitement of apprehension if we compare ourselves with those connoisseurs who could dismiss Gothick as barbarous, simply did not "see" primitive Italian art, thought, if they considered it at all, the art of China or India merely quaint or grotesque; but we have gained one thing of great value. The fact that facile or fashionable people, the fribbles who tack themselves on to the fringes of any movement, make absurd claims for savage and infantile works of art, must not blind us to the more important fact that to-day we can find sincere pleasure in artistic manifestations so different in expression that to find in them all the spirit of beauty means a splendid recognition of the essential unity of all honest art. Latitudinarianism in æsthetics has its dangers, but it is at best a denial of the bigoted exclusiveness which is only able to applaud Raphael at the expense of Botticelli, to dismiss Byzantine art in impatient ignorance as deplorably hieratic, or to denounce the Minster at York because it does not conform to the pattern of St. Paul's Cathedral. That the broadening of our appreciation, and consequently of our pleasure, is a gain only pedants and fanatics can deny; and in denying it they do grave disservice to the cause they espouse, for they will provoke a reaction which is bound to result in extravagant depreciation of all that they so mistakenly champion. We can rejoice in the differences in art if we take the trouble to learn their reason and justification: by such study even the differences between the arts of the East and the West become fruitful instances of a unity none the less real for its apparent contradictions.

In aid of such an understanding of Eastern there can be no better introduction than M. Grousset's history. In the two volumes already published, he discusses the arts of Western Asia, Egypt, Assyrian, Persia, the Arabs and Turkey. He has an enthusiasm which, combined with the evident scholarship that informs his book, will make sympathetic readers indulgent even to his more extravagant claims, as in his assertion that one picture in Aghà Mirak's sixteenth century Apocalypse of Muhammed "seems to us the purest embodiment of the transcendental dream of the monotheistic religions; it is like the work of a Fra Angelico possessing all the power of Michael Angelo." Those who feel that all "Eastern" art has something in common which distinguishes it from the Western, will do well to compare the illustrations of Egyptian work with those of Assyrian and early Persian, and these again with the multiverse art of the great Indian sculptors. No one can fail to see in the Egyptian work the matter-of-fact, actualistic spirit that marks their theology: some of the statues might be portraits of modern American business men, who adhere, in religion, to a fundamentalism not unlike the naive faith that had its origin in the Nile valley. Both these volumes are fascinating and crammed with illustrations, which always serve as useful hints of the character of their originals, and are sometimes in themselves beautiful. If the volume on India is the more successful, it is perhaps that in it M. Grousset has the advantage of greater scope and space; and that Indian art at its best is more significant of the whole life than the art of Persia, which, lovely as it is, has always about it, in the greatest examples, something of the court and the world of luxurious leisure. We have no adverse criticisms to make of these volumes, which are excellently translated by Mrs. Alison Phillips, except that they should certainly be indexed, and that it would be a help if the size of the originals illustrated was occasionally given.

No one can go through the art galleries of Europe without realising how close is the relation between pictorial art and the legends and myths of the people. There are plenty of books which conduct the unlearned through the mazes of Christian hagiography; and with the increased interest in Eastern art many have been desiring a trustworthy guide-book to the mythologies of Asia. There could be nothing better than the magnificent volume, edited by M. J. Hackin, of the Musée Guimet, who has enlisted the aid of such authorities as Henri Maspero, de Wilman-Grebowska, Clément Huart and Raymond Linossier. There are excellently full essays on all the main mythologia of Asia. The different varieties of Buddhism, in its land of origin, in China, in Tibet, are expounded; and there is an adequate, if necessarily brief, note on the mythology of Kafiristan. Lovers of art as well as students of religion will treasure the book for its illustrations: they are more than three hundred and fifty in number, and fifteen are admirably reproduced plates in colour.

With Mr. Stokes's amusing, provocative essay we enter on the region of controversy rather than of description. He quotes with approval Strzygowski's pronouncement that "Non-representational art is not more backward nor more primitive than representational; it is simply different," to which the retort is that of old non-representational art did not attempt to express in its forms objects more naturally expressed by representation. The artist who made the Book of Kells would have been quite as distressed by Picasso or Braque's non-representational work as Raphael would have been. Mr. Stokes's aim in this book is to emphasise the value of the northern element in Renascence sculpture and architecture, and we forgive much to a critic who exalts the triumphant genius of Verocchio. It is harder to agree with him in his complaints of the draughtsmanlike quality of Brunelleschi's work; and he is too ready to condemn so charming an artist as Mino da Fiesole simply because he was consummately successful in his particular aim. This volume, which treats merely of Florence and Verona, is the first of a new study of the Renascence; and we are glad to notice that Mr. Stokes resists the temptation to isolate overmuch that great period of æsthetic revival.

Miss Saunders's survey of mediæval art in England and Dr. Borenius's thorough investigation into the appearances of Thomas of Canterbury in European art, will surprise some readers who are still unaware of the riches of art other than architecture in England, and the extent of the fame of St. Thomas, that early and effective scourge of kings. Miss Saunders writes for the unlearned—she even explains the symbolic character of the pelican and the phœnix—and her book is an admirable introduction, generously illustrated, to the arts and crafts of the middle ages. Dr. Borenius's book is rather for specialists, though no student of history can resist the fascination of following the progress of the murdered Archbishop after his death—he is to be found represented in places as remote as Skepptuna in Sweden, Urbino, Toro, Tarrasa near Barcelona, and Tettens in Oldenburg.

Mr. Hind's book on aspects of Rembrandt's genius is a brilliant and lively piece of work. As he says in his prefatory note, he is not afraid of revising his opinions or of contradicting himself, quoting in his support Ruskin who said, "I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly until I have contradicted myself at least three times." The liveliness of Mr. Hind's essay is due to his continual recollection, so deepfounded as to be unconscious, that the greatest painters differ from others in degree rather than kind; and so he brightens his work, and throws valuable light on his subject by comparing Rembrandt at times with modern artists. The best of his essays are those on Portrait, and that analysing Rembrandt's genius; in these Mr. Hind plunges, without pretension or arrogance, into the heart of his subject. He has the great gift of discussing with his hearers—these essays were delivered as lectures at Harvard—rather than dictating to them, and has the air of making the most inexpert immediately full of his own vast stores of knowledge. There are over one hundred illustrations.

Even if his favourite village is not illustrated in Mr. Wickham's book—Bibury is not, nor Pitchcombe, nor Symondsbury, nor Whitechurch Canonicorum—a man cannot fail to be delighted in this lovely little record of the unspoiled places of England. Here is a beauty about which none quarrel, a delight that is there free for the wayfarer, and a tradition that even still, in these days of bungaloid, has its power and its persuasiveness. This is a book of photographic pictures, a few good line drawings, and a text that is informative and concise. In some of these villages work often unsuspected is done in the making of new things of beauty. Mr. and Mrs. Sandford have written and illustrated their pleasant tale in the village of Heathercombe, in Devonshire, where also it is published; but there seems to be something wrong in the statement that this book is printed by them there, for in contradiction to their note to this effect is a statement on the back of the title-page that the book has been published at the Chiswick Press. Only one hundred copies have been done; but even so a guinea is rather much to ask for this slim volume of twenty-seven pages. Still in Waltham St. Lawrence, Mr. and Mrs. Gibbings, with whom is now Mr. George Churchill, continue to defy the depression and to challenge our courage by producing books of new and more admirable beauty. Their only concession to present conditions is that they have printed but 275 copies of this ravishing edition of *Twelfth Night*, which means presumably that they are making no effort to sell them in America. It is a delightful volume. Mr. Ravilious's

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PLUS
Plus what?
Plus a little something some others haven't got

gay and mannered illustrations at once decorate and interpret the text; and what more could one ask of any pictures in a book? The volume is half bound in leather, with linen sides on which some of Mr. Ravilious's figures are stamped.

FLEETS IN BEING

Last Days of the German Fleet. By LUDWIG FREIWALD. Translated by MARTIN MOORE, with an introduction by HECTOR C. BYWATER. Constable. 7s. 6d.

The Real Navy. By Lieut.-Commander the Hon. J. M. KENWORTHY. Hutchinson. 12s. 6d.

The Tragedy of the Dardanelles. By EDMOND DELAGE. Translated by WINIFRED RAY, with an introduction by General Sir IAN HAMILTON. Lane. 7s. 6d.

Any account of the last days of the German High Seas Fleet, including the mutinies at Kiel and Wilhelmshaven and the surrender at Scapa Flow, written by a German naval rating who was himself present on these occasions and is obviously anxious to tell us the whole truth as he saw it, can hardly fail to interest English readers. Such a book was plainly worth translating. The style does not matter. In point of fact the author employs throughout the very worst kind of German journalese. Nearly every sentence has a new paragraph to itself. When the German officers find themselves ordered about by the newly formed sailors' soviets, they "choke," or "strike a smashing blow on the table," or "the blood rushes to their heads," or alternatively their "noble Nordic faces" become deathly pale. The narrative of the last scene at Scapa Flow, though written with real emotion (for Freiwald was a patriotic die-hard of the Right), is marred by such unconvincing touches as the loud cries of "Old England for ever!" alleged to have been raised by British bluejackets as the Germans entered the bay, or the "three, harsh, masculine cheers" of the German crews, as the last of their scuttled warships took the ground. Nor is it possible to agree with many of the author's more general statements. "Britain" was not "saved in her darkest hour," when the German submarines were withdrawn by order of Prince Max's Government in October, 1918; she had already learned how to deal with them and the danger was past. Other misstatements are very properly corrected in the translator's footnotes.

Yet when all this is said, and all allowance made for the author's habitual sabre-rattling and lack of humour, the book remains extraordinarily interesting. The progress of the revolution and the steady deterioration in the Fleet's moral are traced step by step; and the fact that Freiwald seems to attribute the whole thing to mere accident and the machinations of a few Communist seamen (an obviously inadequate explanation) does not detract materially from the dramatic effect. He takes us from ship to ship, showing exactly how it happened, making a wonderful story of it all, but always explaining—explaining too much. The simple truth is that the spirit of the German fleet, like that of the Russian, was unequal to the strain imposed upon it in the war. It fought magnificently in the beginning; it could always shoot straighter than its enemies; but its spirit wilted, as the spirit of Napoleon's fleets had wilted, under the deadening influence of the blockade.

Commander Kenworthy also has something to say about the lessons of the great war. He holds strong views, for instance, on the subject of the German submarine campaign—especially the murderous attacks on neutral shipping. "These abominations," he writes, "disgraced the German naval flag, and no special pleading about reprisals can excuse them." But "if the Germans had known of the real potentialities of the submarine at the beginning of the war, or, worse still, before it, they could have beaten us at sea." He is against submarines, and against big battleships. His chapter on future problems of naval warfare is perhaps the most interesting in the book. But his general intention is much wider—to give a picture of life in the Royal Navy in modern times—and in that he succeeds to admiration, so far as his limited space will allow. There are two very informative chapters on discipline, and another in which the proposed British attack on Heligoland during the war is discussed at some length and for the first time.

M. Edmond Delage has written a vigorous little book on that latest example of combined land and sea fighting—the unsuccessful Dardanelles campaign. He writes, of course, from the French point of view, but seems to have a remarkably clear idea of the causes of failure. Sir Ian Hamilton replies to some of his charges in a lively introduction. It is hard to keep some of these ancient controversies alive. M. Delage does not appear to have heard of Duckworth's naval expedition against Constantinople, which is unfortunate, for it might have helped his argument. While strongly criticising the various landings on the peninsula and the manner in which they were handled, he is unsparing in his praise of our withdrawal. British troops were always at their best in retreat!

SHORTER NOTICES

England Muddles Through. By HAROLD E. SCARBOROUGH. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Scarborough, London correspondent of the New York *Herald-Tribune* has observed the ways of this country for more than ten years, and the fair-minded English reader will recognise that in general his estimate of the national movement and condition is accurate. He begins with a summary of the economic and social changes of the century, making the somewhat exaggerated statement that they are equal in fundamental importance to the industrial revolution itself. He essays an analysis of the English character and the caste system; and, like most Anglo-Saxon Americans, finds himself impelled to confess admiration of the manner of life achieved by the more civilised sections of our comfortable classes. Altogether, indeed, Mr. Scarborough finds the English to be a civilised folk. He notes the marked absence of the mass hatred which makes the only possible basis for a class war, and in this connection he takes care to explain the nature of the British system of National insurance—a most necessary thing in any book about contemporary England intended for readers on both sides of the Atlantic.

My Story. By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART. Cassell. 10s. 6d.

In this story of her life Mrs. Roberts Rinehart takes us into stirring scenes—she was a correspondent for an American paper during the war, with exceptional facilities for visiting the front—but there is nothing in all her story that excels in interest the opening chapters, in which she tells us of her childhood in a home cramped for means, and of her girlhood when she went through her training as a nurse in a large general hospital. Mrs. Rinehart has long been one of America's leading novelists, but she tells us that writing has always been for her a way of escape, and that never could she deal with the raw, crude, unromantic life that came her way when she tended all sorts and conditions of men and women in the wards of that hospital. How she came to be a writer by accident and found herself successful, yet never relinquished her home life, is told so simply that it seems at first a simple achievement, until one realises how much cheerful courage and unflagging industry the book records.

The French Revolution. By PIERRE GAXOTTE. Translated and with an Introduction by Walter Alison Phillips. Scribners. 15s.

For a serious history of the French Revolution this exciting and provocative book is very ill documented. As a popular account its animus is too naive to be acceptable to any but the most unwary. It would be as well then for readers to take it for what Dr. Phillips calls it, "a work of art" and "a manifesto of a school of political thought," for as a work of art it is excellent reading, and as a manifesto it positively throbs with anti-Socialistic indignation. Accepted on these terms M. Gaxotte's story of the Revolution will be a useful corrective to the more romantic histories, particularly in its references to the old regime, which partisans of the Revolution have libelled and misinterpreted every bit as grossly as the Revolution has been libelled and misinterpreted by the traditionalists.

Doggett's Tours. By RICHARD TURPIN. Grayson. 7s. 6d.

Richard Turpin writes, one cannot doubt, from the bitterness of personal experience. He must himself have suffered the torments of the personal conductor of personally conducted tours: he must himself have known what it is to be told by innumerable people that his life of polite, nerve-racking management of endless parties of tourists, is "one long holiday." The amusement of the story—and some of it is very amusing—comes mainly from the repetition of the inane questions of countless inane persons. The characterisation is neat, but not more; the best picture is that of the "Chief" alternately bullying and cajoling the young men whom he tries to inspire with the excitement of making money for him. Writing this book must have been a pleasant change from gathering the experience on which it is based.

A Naturalist in the Guiana Forest. By MAJOR R. W. G. HINGSTON. Arnold. 18s.

The earlier chapters of this delightful book are devoted to descriptions of the equatorial forest in British Guiana, whither Major Hingston went in 1929 as the leader of the Oxford University Expedition. Major Hingston, after dealing with the forest and its flora and fauna generally, turns to the consideration of the amazing devices whereby the insects and spiders are protected from their enemies. Wonderful as are the mimicries of the leaf and stick-shaped insects, or the intimidating aspects and attitudes assumed by quite harmless cater-

ON READING SHAKESPEARE

by

Logan Pearsall Smith

will be the outstanding feature of the September "LIFE AND LETTERS."

This essay of Mr. Pearsall Smith's should cause a sensation among all who care for poetry and for drama, and are moved by the play of character in art. Writing from a profound acquaintance with the best that has been written about Shakespeare, Mr. Pearsall Smith gives us a guide to guides. In this, his essay is extraordinarily useful to those who shrink from tackling the immense body of Shakespearean criticism. More striking than the scope of his reading are the freshness and originality of his approach to Shakespeare. Here is a modern, a classical, a precise mind raised to enthusiasm and intelligent appreciation of that poet whose genius is only equalled by his casual and careless indifference to the canons of art.

Other contents include:

A GAMBLE IN CLOCKS
By Richard Plunket Greene

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ESSAY ON THE CHARACTER OF SWIFT
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pillars, more wonderful still are the camouflages adopted by the spiders—Major Hingston's drawings of these nests and snares are beyond all praise—whereby they lie concealed or distract the eyes of enemies from their whereabouts. If there still be any who disbelieve that mimicry and other devices of deception have a survival value, this book should finally cure their disbelief.

The States of Europe, 1815–1871. A Study in their Domestic Development. By R. B. MOWAT. Arnold. 18s.

Professor Mowat, whose work on the history of diplomacy is well known, has found a further use for the Foreign Office dispatches preserved in the Record Office as additional sources for the domestic history of the European states. The information thus yielded provides new material which is more helpful in filling in details and supplying corroborations than in upsetting established notions as to the main course of events. Skilfully collected, however, and their interdependence demonstrated, the histories of the several states are presented in a summarised form which will be of special value to students. Not the least interesting subject treated is the stimulus given to Liberal and other movements throughout the continent by the Paris revolution of 1848. This is traced with commendable thoroughness. That revolution led Metternich to exclaim: *Eh bien, mon cher, tout est fini!* No doubt he was a conservative in the sense of Newman's wry definition of one who, having inherited the French Revolution, made good use of it. If for him 1848 meant the end, for many others it meant the beginning of a period (that under review here) which by comparison made the rest of the century seem tame.

The Whitley Council Scheme. By JOHN BARTON SEYMOUR. P. S. King. 12s.

What old history the Whitley Council business seems in these days; and how difficult it is to realise what hopes were once built up on the closer relations between employers and employed which the Councils were to establish! Set up during and shortly after the war, in the period of high wages, scarce labour, and rapidly growing unrest, the Whitley Councils were hailed by all sorts of well-meaning people as a way of meeting the working-class demand for a share in the "control of industry" without seriously disturbing the structure of Capitalism. To-day there are a number of Whitley Councils still in being; but they differ in no notable particular from the Conciliation Boards and similar bodies which existed long before the war. The joint Works Councils, which were meant to be one of their most distinctive features, mostly never came into being at all; and the only lasting effect of the entire scheme has been to equip a certain number of industries with representative negotiating bodies which they previously lacked. Nor is this surprising; for in fact joint control, which the Whitley Scheme seemed to be aiming at, is unworkable. Someone is bound to have the last word; and as long as the employers own the business and have the right to dismiss, or even to shut down altogether, this last word is bound to be theirs. Mr. Seymour, in this volume, tells the story of the Whitley Scheme with accuracy as to facts, but without imagination or much sense of its real significance.

About Motoring

THE SMALL INVICTA

INVICTA cars have painstakingly built up a reputation for the construction of super vehicles, notorious for fine workmanship, splendid coachwork, a very high maximum speed, and an almost unique top gear performance, combined with prices which are modest by comparison with those asked for the absolute royalty of the motor-car world. The market for costly cars has dwindled since the world slump, and this firm has lately attempted to open a new stratum of the market by producing a small Invicta, which they label as the world's finest small car. I have just spent a holiday on one of the latest of these models, and subject to a proviso set out below, the designer and the factory are to be congratulated. The car is rated at 12 h.p., £12 being the annual tax, with correspondingly small insurance premiums. The chassis is quoted at £335, a four-seated touring car at £399, and a low-built sporting saloon at £425. The chassis is entirely up to date in all particulars, the equipment is lavish and complete so that no gadgets need be added after purchase by the most exacting owner, and the car unquestionably makes a bold bid to secure supremacy within its horse-power range.

The key-note of the impressions created by driving this car is acceleration. Mass-produced engines, turned out by the thousand, are no longer woolly as the American cars were once woolly; but these cheap engines normally differ fundamentally in their "feel" both from engines bred by racing firms, and from engines produced by factories which are accustomed to meticulously careful research work in terms of horse-power and performance. Put the average 16 h.p. or 20 h.p. at a long, gentle slope, and whilst the engine will plod away manfully to the summit, it never suggests a surge of life. Indeed, such engines usually feel a little dead even on the level to a driver who is conversant with more aristocratic cars. When they accelerate, they do not remind you of a greyhound sighting a cat, but rather of some aged dame unwillingly breaking into a trot to catch a tram. But this Invicta, small as its engine is, has the genuine race-bred feel. On the level it is always capable of a veritable jump until a high point in its speed range is attained. On prolonged easy slopes of the Aston Rowant or Fish Hill pattern, it can surprise a sophisticated owner by its capacity for acceleration. The ordinary touring owner is inclined to regard acceleration as a virtue which appeals only to the road hog or the racing man. Actually it is a factor of prime value for safety. The late Sir Henry Segrave ascribed his immunity from road accidents to the fact that he always kept "plenty of engine" up his sleeve for emergencies; and by "plenty of engine" he really meant a reserve of accelerative power. However tamely we drive, a journey implies constant overtaking. The overtaken vehicles may be as slow as horse-carts, or they may be obsolescent vans or taxis, or overloaded sidecars, or "T" model Fords converted into small buses. Whenever we are abreast another vehicle, except on the widest arterial roads, we are in danger, for the straights are brief, and the other fellow may loom up from behind the bend ahead at sixty or seventy. Acceleration shortens the period during which we are alongside these slow vehicles, and hastens to replace us in safety against the hedge or kerb on our own side of the road. The man in a great hurry may value it for less honest reasons, in that it enables him to overtake when a stodgier car simply dare not overtake; but for the general public and for sedate drivers a car with genuine acceleration is definitely safer than a stodgy car. And acceleration this small Invicta can claim in quite an unusual degree. No doubt its jump is conferred by rather a high compression ratio, and the pistons are somewhat inclined to pink; but this tendency merely suggests skilful use of the ignition lever, and such skill is amply rewarded. With its lively engine goes a lovely gear box with a delightfully easy and convenient change; the lever falls

IN next week's issue of "The New Statesman and Nation" will be published the first of a series of articles on the policy and the future of the Labour Party. The writers will include:

Arthur Pugh **Sir Stafford Cripps, M.P.**
Professor H. J. Laski **J. M. Keynes**

These articles will discuss critically and constructively the principal problems which are to be dealt with at the Labour Party Conference opening at Leicester on October 3.

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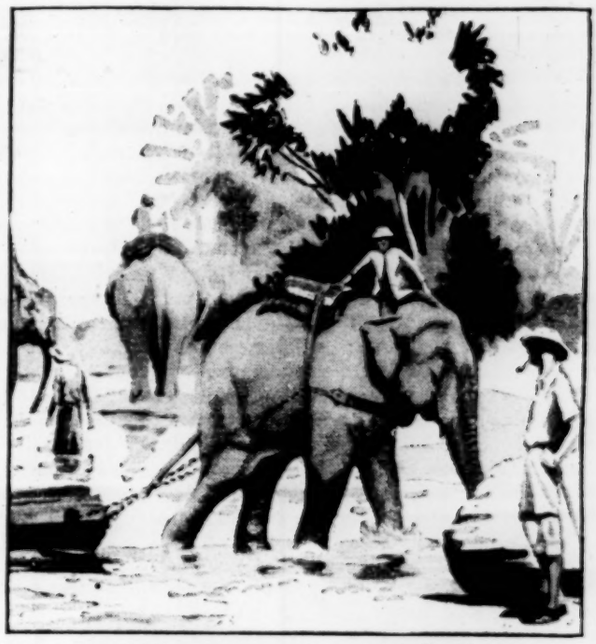

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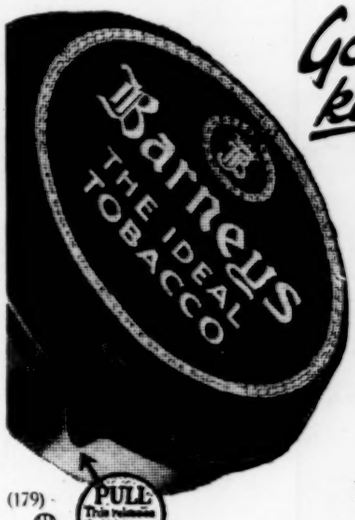

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naturally to hand, and little deftness is required to effect perfect changes. Being race-bred, the engine is capable of very high revolutions, so that the top gear is no more than 6 to 1, but the engine is so beautifully balanced that when it is running extremely fast, it remains perfectly smooth. The steering is admirable, light, sensitive, and definite, without shock or stiffness; a school girl could handle it without the least sensation of effort. The brakes are adequate, and well levered, never demanding either a fierce stamp or a conscious shove. The suspension is tolerable without being in any sense remarkable. The fuel consumption varies with driving methods, and can no doubt become quite high if the car is driven really hard, but a sedate driver will probably register somewhere near thirty miles to the gallon. There are no oil leaks, as the workmanship is superb; and the consumption is negligible; refilling should probably not be required until the oil in the sump is growing stale.

Insufficient care has been taken in mating the saloon body to the chassis. The body itself is handsome, comfortable, and roomy enough for four people of average stature; but a tall or corpulent driver should try the standard coachwork before he places a definite order. The fauteuil type front seats are separately adjustable, and a large owner could probably make himself cosy in the standard body with the aid of a longer steering column. But as the car is now turned out, the winder of the offside door window is apt to foul the right thigh, and obstruct access to the horizontal pull-up side brake lever, which ought to be superseded by a vertical lever. The gear lever, when placed in the third notch, will hamper the left thigh of a tall driver; and only a small boot can squeeze in between the foot brake and the side of the body to reach the throttle pedal. The car is yet another example of the evil practice of mounting all the lamp controls on the hub of the steering wheel. A stub radial lever, if successively moved to the right, switches on the side lamps, dip-and-dim position of headlamps, and full head lamps. It follows that if this lever is turned clockwise, it successively extinguishes all the lamps. It is very easy for a dazzled driver to turn it a quarter of an inch too far and put out all his lamps; and if he is being seriously dazzled at the moment, he may not realise that even his side lamps are out. The "stop" position of such steering hub levers should always leave the side-lamps switched on, and these final lamps should be controlled by a separate switch on the dashboard.

The car is exceptionally well lubricated and cooled, and may be taken into the Alps, Dolomites or other mountainous regions without any fear that the owner will be humiliated by overheating. Indeed, no British car is better suited for mountaineering purposes, as the short wheelbase and delicious steering are ideal for the fierce cornering which becomes continuous in Switzerland.

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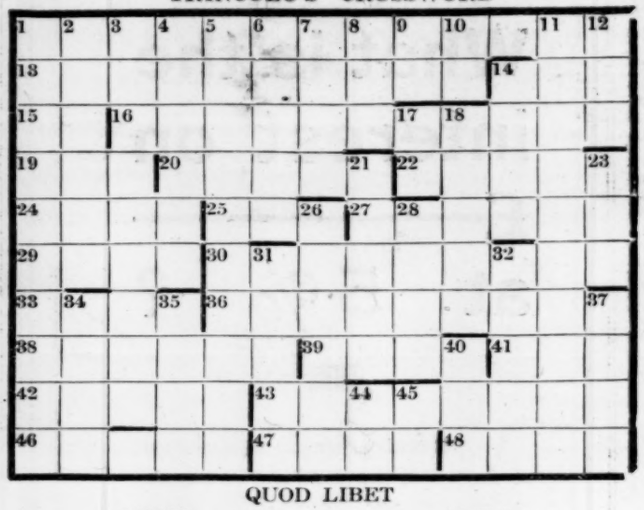

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ACROSS

1. They know a decent meal when they see one.
13. Once a habitué of the cloak room.
14. Anguilla.
15. Found in Indore.
16. Without restriction.
19. They say the O.E. is not confined to O.E.'s.
20. A cheerful one is commended.
22. The reverse of jollification.
24. His hands were impersonated.
25. Confessor in little.
27*rev.* Humiliate.
29. Stlks.
30. A nice mixture.
33. Tobacco—one pound.
36. Only real to a philosopher.
38. The unkindest remarks should be.
39. Climax of mixed spice.
41. Vegetable before 44.
42. A people's genius.
43. Characteristic plant curtailed.
46. Opposite of 36.
47. Maud was queen in a garden of girls.
48*rev.* Some farmers possess a number.

DOWN

1. Aren't we peculiar?
2. Tense.
3. *So* particular.
4. Turanian people.
5. Give up this one.
6. I ought to be planted at Geneva.
7. I could be anonymous with less.
8. Yes, Mr. Capet, inside you.
9. 10. Churned-up mud.
11. Touching this question of distance.
12. Crafty.
14*rev.* Commanded.
17, 18. One of ten.
21. Big tree uprooted.
23. Overheard at Ascot.
26. Golden dolphin.
28. The big one is not often met with.
31. Where Australians live.
32. A shark, for instance.
34. My first half is quite superfluous.
35*rev.* My hall was eponymous.
37. Not hard made harder.
40. Mrs. S.
44*rev.* Other after 45*rev.*
45. See 44.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

Across: 1. burnished gold. 11. sycamore *rev.* 14. maple. 15. Endymion. 16. Athos. 17. C.C. (County Council). 19. sobers. 20. ele (eel). 21. w(illow). 22. hop. 24. pine. 25. ebifor (boiler). 28. (he)roic. 29. tarn. 32. Nile ("The Rivals"). 33. pea *rev.* 34. chimer(a). 36. gaib (a big). 38. ri(ch). 39. ail *rev.* 41. f(ie)ld. 42. (and 26 *du*) olive. 45. sandal. 46. hazel. 47. horse-chestnut.

Down.—1. beech. 2. win ("Ode to a Grecian Urn"). 3. rods. 4. iambic. 5. scientific. 6. esnse (sense). 7. Gatling. 8. Ophelia. 9. (wi)llow. 10. desire. 12. myopic. 13. yore. 14. hornbeam *rev.* 18. co(ins). 23. poplar. 26. olive. 27. larch. 28. osier *rev.* 30. halma *rev.* 31. elder *rev.* 35. Hade(s). 37. belt. 40. (co)ins. 43. lat(itude). 44. N(a)zi *rev.*

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

No. 6.—THE "PHLEGMATIC'S" RETURN VOYAGE.

On the *Phlegmatic's* return voyage six solvers—A, B, C, D, E and F—participated in the daily competitions. Each of the six in turn set daily six conundrums for the other five to solve. One point was awarded by the setter for the solving of each conundrum. All six points were awarded each day; no point was divided. The order of capacity of the solvers was A, B, C, D, E, F, none of whom was ever beaten, in respect of the number of competitions solved in a single day, by a lower-ranking competitor.

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At the end of six days the amounts paid into the pool totalled £78. On no two days were the amounts paid in the same. A had won £60 in the six days. C paid the same amount into the pool on each of the five days when he competed. How much on balance had been won or lost by B?

Problem No. 4.—NEVERLAND.

The original distribution of the General's forces was: At Day 32 units. At Night 4 units. At Morrow 64 units.

Space forbids my setting out the solution in detail.

Problem No. 3.—AT THE BROWNS' PARTY.

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Vol. 1. No. 2 September, 1932

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

BY TOREADOR.

THE NEW ISSUE EMBARGO AND STERLING—THE UNECONOMICS OF THE SALTER CONFERENCE—RUBBER—SKINNED DIRECTORS.

THE embargo on new issues is having a bad press but that is not extraordinary seeing that every daily paper is anxious to get back prospectus advertising. It was amusing to find certain financial editors becoming sarcastic about a "National Government Investment Board." The Investment Board, which is put forward as part of the Socialist financial policy by the Labour Party Executive, is modelled on that of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, and does not involve embargoes or the sort of political interference which is now contemplated apparently by the National Government. There is good reason to fear that Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Neville Chamberlain have been offering "protection" in the London capital market to Dominion borrowers as a bribe for meagre concessions to British manufacturers in Dominion markets. The Commonwealth Government of Australia has an early maturity to meet (about £13 millions for New South Wales in November) and is anxious to reopen the capital market with a 4½ per cent. refunding issue. It is reported that the Australian delegates at Ottawa asked for a British Government guarantee for a huge refunding loan to deal not only with the New South Wales maturity, but with certain maturities and loans callable next year. If, to avoid giving a Government guarantee, Messrs. Baldwin and Chamberlain have agreed to prolong the new issue embargo, which is no longer wanted for the War Loan conversion operation, merely in the interests of Australian borrowing, it is a scandalous and dangerous precedent to create. The Commonwealth Government abused its borrowing facilities in the past and should not be helped to obtain better credit terms than it deserves. And does not the Treasury realise that the absence of domestic investment issues in the capital market is encouraging the flow of capital from London to New York and accentuating the slump in the sterling exchange?

* * *

The economic aspects of the report of the Road-Railway Conference, of which Sir Arthur Salter was chairman, are strictly no concern of a City page, but they are of such importance that no intelligent investor can ignore them. Whether one section of private capital, represented by the railways, is to be benefited at the expense of another section, represented by the commercial motor manufacturers, is not likely to cause any nationally minded investor a moment's anxiety, but as the whole of the transport services of the country will probably pass, in the next five or ten years, into the hands of the State, it is highly important from the national point of view that the most economic system of internal transport should be developed. And if the recommendations of the Salter Report are carried out, it is quite certain that this will not occur. Of course, if a conference of these conflicting commercial interests, presided over by an ex-Civil Servant, is called to thrash out a compromise between road and rail services, the result is bound to be economically absurd. And so it is. For example, there is good reason to believe that the future of inland goods transportation, economically considered, should lie with the Diesel-engined lorry, but this is one of the vehicles singled out for ferocious taxation by the Salter Conference. A petrol-driven lorry of between nine and ten tons unladen weight, fitted with pneumatic tyres, is to pay a licence duty of £226 per annum as compared with the present duty of £48: a Diesel-engined lorry of nine tons is to pay £332 against £48. Does the Salter Conference really want to prevent the growth of our cheapest form of goods transport? A Diesel-engined lorry consumes one-fifth the amount of fuel consumed by a petrol lorry of the same weight. Does Sir Arthur Salter want to see our already large overseas petrol bill go on increasing?

* * *

If I were a commercial motor manufacturer I would move my factory to a country where the State allowed the most efficient and economical system of transport to develop, State owned or privately owned. The Stock Exchange dealers took the precaution, on reading the Salter Conference proposals, of marking down the prices of the commercial motor shares, such as Leyland, Dennis and Thornycroft, but I believe that the Ford Motor Company, whose British business has been built up on its commercial vehicles, would be more adversely affected by the proposals than any other firm. Of these shares I would only hold Leyland on the chance that some greater common sense will be shown by the Government than by the Salter Conference. I cannot agree with the market's adverse view of Thomas Tilling on this occasion, for the main-line railways have practically entered into partnership with the Tilling-British Automobile Traction group to operate passenger motor services. These passenger services are not in jeopardy. Indeed, travelling lately in the North of England has made me realise how dependent is the population in these bleak, scattered regions upon road services for their means of communication. The adverse factors in the Thomas Tilling position are the present decline in pleasure travelling and the imminence of a rise in the price of petrol. The latter, however, could be offset largely by economies in operating expenditure, for the modern motor bus is a much cheaper proposition to operate than the uncomfortable vehicle of three years ago.

* * *

Several letters followed me on holiday from aggrieved shareholders of rubber companies. I determined on my return to ventilate their grievances which they have borne patiently for so long. Not that I can sympathise altogether with them in their present loss of capital values. It had become an unlovely British habit to gamble in rubber shares. Many shareholders were so convinced after the 1910 boom that nature gave inordinate profits to British rubber producers every ten or fifteen years that they did not trouble to sell their holdings even in the boom of 1925. So they have seen the *Investor's Chronicle* index of rubber share prices (December 31, 1923=100) tumble from 248.3 in 1925 to 19.1 at the end of June, 1932—a fall of 92 per cent. The recent flurry in commodity prices, rubber rising from 1⅞d. to 2⅜d. per pound in the past seven weeks, has stirred the dry bones of the rubber share market and the *Investor's Chronicle* index jumped to 29.2 by the end of July. This rise of 53 per cent. for the bargain-hunters should not encourage shareholders to expect in due season the recovery of their lost capital. The fantastic days of Government restriction of producers' output will never return, first, because both Dutch and British Governments have decided that with so much production in native hands restriction will not work, secondly, because no Government can decently tolerate huge profits, realised through Government decree, being handed over to private producers for the unrestricted enjoyment of their shareholders. Meanwhile, world stocks of rubber at the end of 1931 were not far short, at over 645,000 tons, of a year's consumption at the 1931 rate, and in the first six months of this year have declined on balance by only 12,000 tons. The rubber optimists must be budgeting upon a very early trade recovery in America.

* * *

But to return to the private grievances of rubber shareholders. Petty capitalism in the rubber producing industry is on trial. It is a monstrous thing that in this third year of slump British plantations should continue to be divided among a host of small companies each with its board of over-paid, non-resident, and for the most part inexpert, directors. Rubber boards are the prize pocket-boroughs of the company world. An examination of the 1931-32 manual of Rubber Producing Companies, issued by the Mincing Lane Tea and Rubber Shareholders' Association, reveals the fact that there are 578 British companies operating in British and Dutch territory with 819 directors and a nominal capital of about £110 millions. The Imperial Tobacco Company of Great Britain and Ireland manages nearly half that amount of capital with only thirty-two directors and few would claim that the rubber plantation industry has anything like the complications of the tobacco business in all its stages, leaf to cigarette coupon. The fees payable to rubber company directors, considered as a percentage of net sales and profits, are in most cases a fantastically high price to pay for management. After all, nature does most of the work on a mature estate. I am not suggesting that a good director is not worth his price. The way in which costs have been drastically reduced on the estates reflects credit on the good directors as well as on the good estate managers. The rubber plantation industry requires not so much cheaper boards as fewer boards of directors. There are far too many individual companies for an industry which is concentrated in well defined tropical areas. I would therefore counsel rubber shareholders to form a protection society and to press home upon directors, by an organised system of deputations in private, and protestations at general shareholders' meetings, the urgent need for amalgamations without compensation to directors for loss of their "pocket boroughs."

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